the weekly Standard

NOVEMBER 27, 2000

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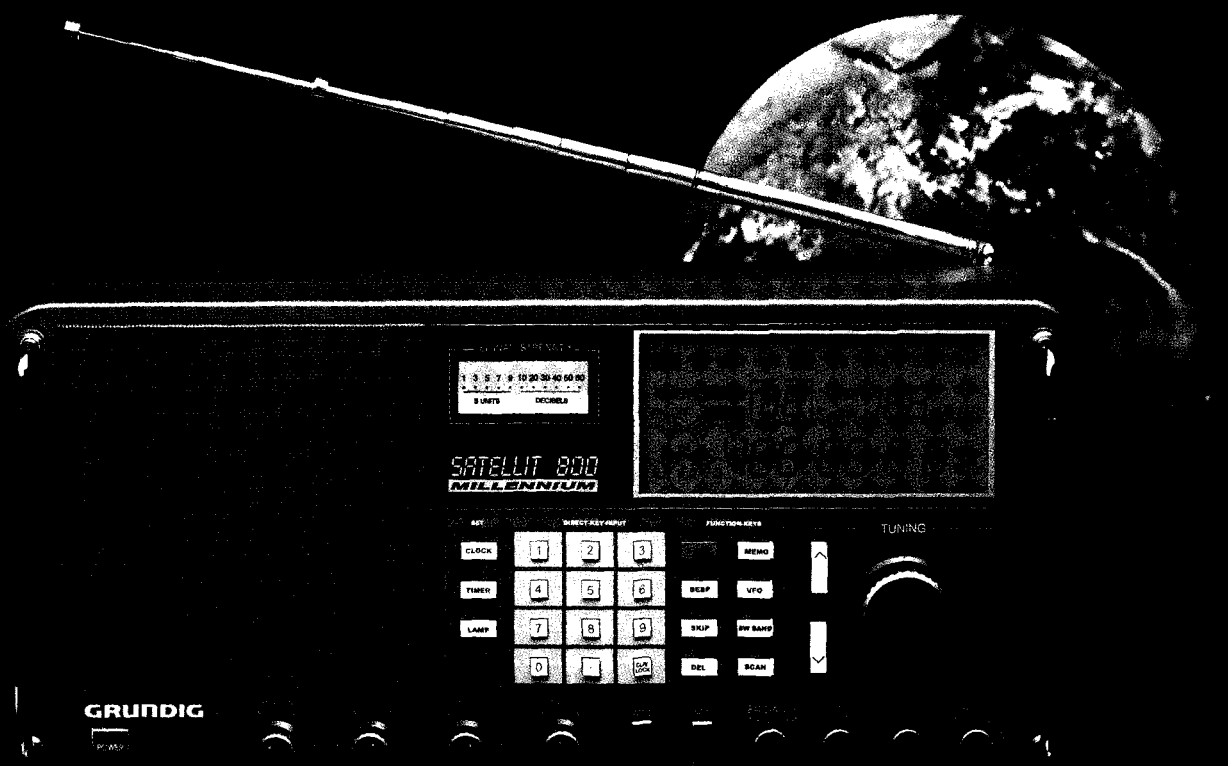

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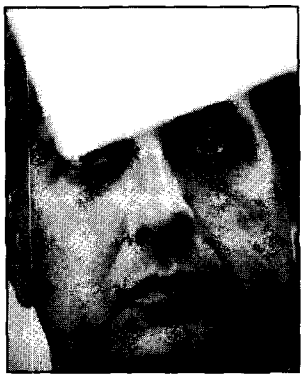

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the weekly Standard

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Paul Begala's Hate Speech

Al Gore, presidential candidate of the Dimple party, proposed a meeting with George W. Bush last week "not to negotiate, but to improve the tone of our dialogue in America." Bush cordially turned Gore down. But there's plenty Gore can do on his own to "improve the tone." He can start by putting a muzzle on his own advisers. The worst, in a close race, has been Paul Begala.

You may recall Begala as the altar boy of the Clinton administration, a man who distinguished himself during the Lewinsky scandal as the Clinton spinner who noted credulously that his boss had "looked the American people in the eye, and said he did not have an improper physical relationship, that he didn't ask anyone to lie." Quoth Begala: "That's enough. I believe in this man."

You might think that after the shock to his system Begala must have suffered upon learning the truth of the Lewinsky allegations, the man would seek a new line of work, one where he wouldn't be duped so badly. But no, being used by and lied to by Bill Clinton seems to have had the perverse effect of aggravating Begala's political Manicheanism: His side is still Virtue on stilts, and Republicans are Evil incarnate. Begala learned this shtick from James Carville, who performs it with greater panache and at least seems aware it is shtick. Not so Begala. His November 13 essay for the MSNBC website, titled "Banana Republicans," is an astonishing outburst.

Begala is reacting against the national map that showed Bush counties in red and Gore precincts in blue. "If you look closely at that map," he writes, "you see a more complex picture. You see the state where James Byrd was lynch-dragged behind a pick-up truck until his body came apart—it's red. You see the state where Matthew Shepard was crucified on a split-rail fence for the crime of being gay—it's red. You see the state where right-wing extremists blew up a federal office building and murdered scores of federal employees—it's red. The state where an Army private who was thought to be gay was bludgeoned to death with a baseball bat, and the state where neo-Nazi skinheads murdered two African-Americans because of their skin color, and the state where Bob Jones University spews its anti-Catholic bigotry: they're all red too."

This is not "a more complex picture." This is political hate speech. So much for the tone of our dialogue. ♦

Still More Anti-Bush Hate!

After he muzzles his advisers, if he is indeed serious about improving the tone of "our dialogue," Al Gore should dissociate himself from the not-so-subtle slurs by backers who are associating George W. Bush with the Nazis. Charles Paul Freund, writing for *Reason Online*, points to one egregious example.

"The biggest problem with [the Gore] storyline" in West Palm Beach, Freund notes, "is that it lacked a villain. Designed by and approved by local Florida Democrats, the controversial ballot could not be tied to any Bush allies. Lacking any antipathy to exploit, Gore attempted to mobilize guilt in its place; his campaign portrayed its blundering supporters as, once again, victims of history. Because many of the supposedly confused voters were blacks and elderly Jews, such figures as Jesse Jackson and film maker Michael Moore adopted one of the most grotesquely shameless political positions in recent political history: the exploitation of slavery and even the Holocaust in the interest of padding Al Gore's Florida vote.

"As Moore wrote on his website in arguing for a new vote in Palm Beach County, 'There are tens of thousands of people who lived through [the Holocaust], escaped the ovens, and are now living out their final years in South Florida. . . . Sixty-two years ago . . . the Holocaust began in full force on what was called Kristallnacht. The German government sent goon squads throughout the country to trash and burn the homes, stores, and temples of its Jewish citizens. Seven years and 6 million slaughtered lives later, the Jewish people of Europe were virtually extinct. A few survived. I will not allow those who survived to come here to this land of the free to be abused again.'"

And that's not all. In the midst of the Florida electoral war, this headline appeared in the Sarasota *Herald-Tribune*: "Author links Bush family to Nazis." According to John Loftus, author of *Unholy Trinity: The Vatican, the Nazis and the Swiss Banks* and a former prosecutor with the Justice Department's Nazi War Crimes Unit, George W. Bush's granddad Prescott was a principal in a bank that was secretly owned by Nazi industrialists during the 1930s and '40s. When the Union Banking Corporation dissolved in 1951, Prescott Bush made out with $1.5 million. "That's where the Bush family fortune came from: It came

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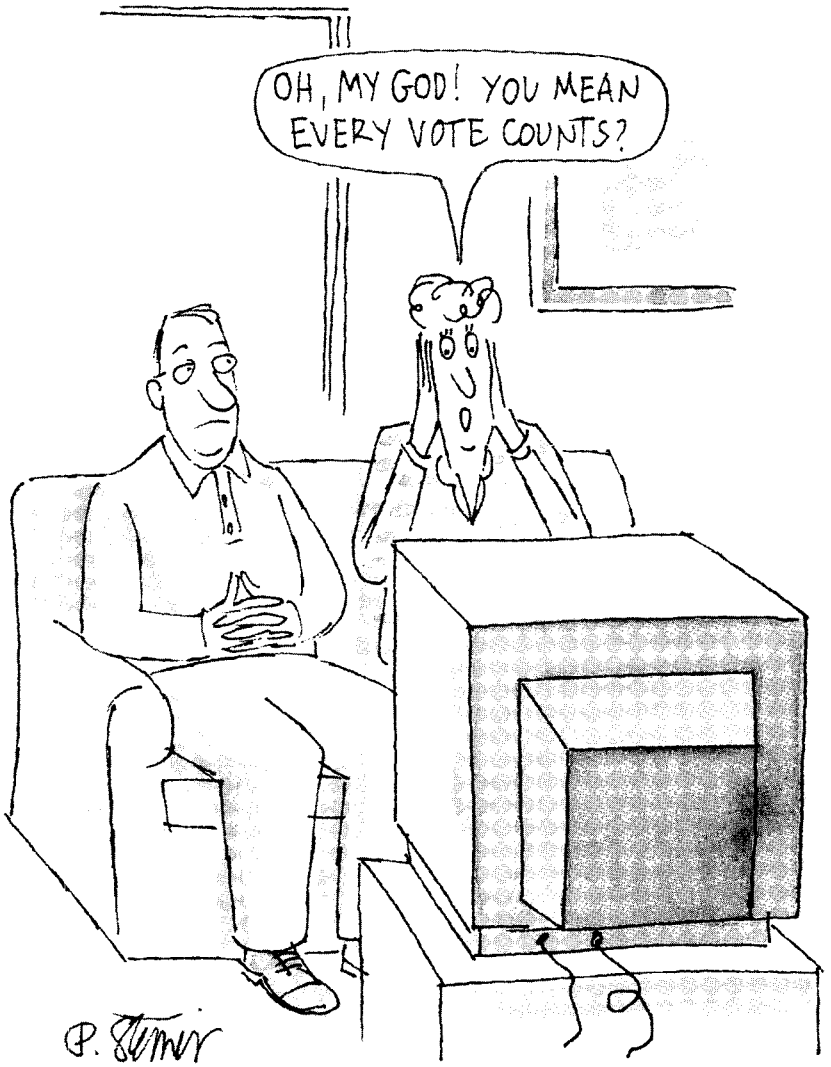

from the Third Reich," Loftus said at the Sarasota Reading Festival.

The headline was unconscionable, as was the retelling of Loftus's tendentious argument. But at least the *Herald-Tribune* pointed out that both the Kennedys and the Rockefellers benefited from Nazi-related corporations and other such financial connections. By this same logic, of course, almost any family that had international financial dealings in the years before World War II can be said to have "links" to the Nazis. Why single out Bush? Because it's open season on Bushes. Now, what was that again about the tone of our dialogue? ♦

Better Late Than Never

Somehow it figures that the American Academy of Actuaries would have a highly sophisticated theory of how to hedge political risks.

The academy is the nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing actuaries in Washington, with the emphasis on nonpartisan. Yet if you were a close watcher of the Gore campaign ads attacking the Bush Social Security plan, you might have noticed that they used the academy's logo and featured this claim: "The American Academy of Actuaries looked at [Bush's] plan and concluded it would lead to catastrophic results."

This was a fairly outrageous misrepresentation, as you might imagine, given the sober reputation of actuaries. In fact, the group had issued a report on October 26 criticizing the Social Security and Medicare plans of both camps, and characterizing them as "incomplete" and "potentially misleading."

So you can see the pickle this created for the actuaries. How to defend their nonpartisan honor without seeming to favor the Bush campaign? The actuaries no doubt carefully calibrated the costs and benefits. They issued a statement that read, in part: "We call upon the Gore campaign to stop misusing the American Academy of Actuaries' name and logo in its paid political advertisements. The Academy regrets that the public may have received the erroneous impression from the ads that it supports Vice President Gore's Social Security and Medicare proposals. . . . The characterization of the Academy's analysis by Vice President Gore is erroneous."

A bold rebuke? Not really. It wasn't released until November 7, Election Day. Too late to hurt Gore. ♦

"The Nuclear Button Option"

Gore strategists last week told the *New York Times* that their campaign is preparing to call not just for a recount but for a revote in Palm Beach, if necessary, and that they (the Gore people) have nicknamed this "the nuclear button option."

Charming. Yes, we know litigators like to talk this way. But it strikes us that it's the last metaphor we need to hear from people who may soon be in proximity to real nuclear buttons. ♦

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Casual

Washington Diarist

People in my Virginia neighborhood don't gather in bookstores on Sunday nights to talk about ideas. People in certain parts of Northwest Washington do, as I discovered last weekend when I attended a discussion of *The Slate Diaries* at Politics & Prose, a lefty bookseller on upper Connecticut Avenue.

The Slate Diaries is just what it sounds like: a collection of diary entries compiled by *Slate* magazine and published in book form. (I am one of the contributors.) The people who came to discuss the book were just what you would imagine, too. The men were thin. The women had long earrings and complicated sweaters. Some had children in tow. Others, clearly, did not. Generally they were friendly but awkward, the sort of people who have read about manners, but aren't quite sure how to use them.

In other words, they were living stereotypes: Volvo-driving, sandal-wearing, NPR-listening, arms-are-for-hugging liberals. I liked them.

I liked the idea of them, anyway. It's hard to knock people who are interested in books, or even people who only pretend to be interested in books. In college, I would have mocked these sandal-wearers as phony and pretentious. The meaner part of me still does, silently. But at this point in the digital-cable-wireless-infotainment revolution, even literary pretense is a welcome improvement.

And, as it turned out, the liberals got a pretty good conversation going. They talked earnestly about what sorts of people make the most interesting diarists, about who journal-keepers believe they are writing for, and so on. Then somebody raised a particularly good, and difficult, question: Why do people keep diaries?

I've kept a journal on and off since the sixth grade, and I couldn't say why, even to myself. In fact—and I hate to admit this for what it says about me—until I stopped into Politics & Prose, I'd never really thought about it.

Actually, I had thought about it, but not in a way that pertained to me. I've always suspected that other people who keep journals must have emotional problems. They write because they need a place to weep—and paper never talks back. Or, worse, their journal-keeping is a way of making a grandiose statement about themselves: "I consider my life so incredibly interesting that for history's sake its details must be recorded." Either way, I figured, diarists are narcissists.

I, meanwhile, had come up with a number of less embarrassing explanations for my journal-keeping. It's a writing exercise, I said at times. It's a novel taking shape, I decided at others. On the way home from the bookstore I faced the unflattering truth: I keep a journal for the same reason people undertake any long, repetitious project: fear.

In the car the other day, my 5-year-old daughter was trying out some of her latest knock-knock jokes on me. Pretty good, I said. I used to know a lot of those. "Why don't you know them anymore?" she asked.

I gave her a lame answer (a brain is like an attic, and mine is full), which seemed to suffice for the moment. I didn't tell her about all the other things I don't know anymore: how I spent the summer of 1987, who I ate lunch with two months ago, what she and her siblings talked about on the way to the park last weekend.

The answers to these and countless other questions have been lost in the jumble of my mental attic. It's minutia, most of it, but it's what makes up my life. And it's what I record in my journal. I'm pretty sure no one will ever read any of it. I know I won't. But it's there. Which means it isn't really lost.

Tucker Carlson

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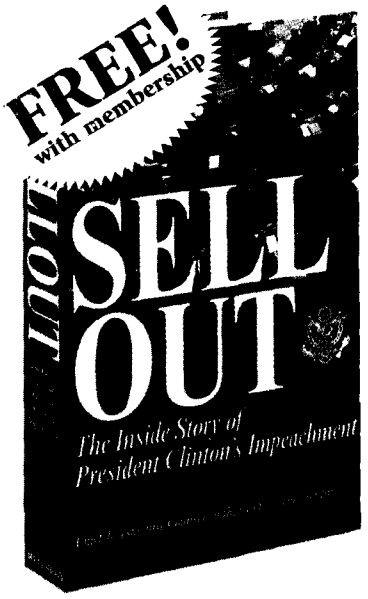
"As a former Chicago prosecutor, I thought I'd seen treachery, doublecrosses and sellouts. But what I saw behind the scenes at the Clinton impeachment shocked me to my core!"



"It was a sellout. A pitiful, cowardly sellout ... right from the start! They'll call me a liar ... a traitor ... and worse. But I was there. At the impeachment. Every day. Behind the closed doors. I was there when the deals went down. When the cowardly GOP senators surrendered. When the brave House managers were sold down the river. I saw it all. The small lies, the big lies and the damn lies. It's time to tell the truth ... and name the names. I just can't keep silent about it any more."

So speaks David Schippers, a tough, veteran prosecutor and the former Chief Counsel of the House Judiciary Committee. Schippers is an honest Democrat who worked with Ken Starr to make the case against Bill Clinton. For his courage he was smeared, vilified, and all but crucified: in other words, he got the full Carville-Clinton treatment. And did his allies rush to his defense? Hardly! The Republicans were intent only on pursuing "bipartisanship" (that is, abject surrender).

Even if you followed the impeachment stories in the media every day - or if you've read any of the journalistic rehashes that have come out lately — you'll find a great deal that's new in *Sellout*. Because Schippers is beholden to neither party — and because he was in on the most gruesome details of Clinton's behavior from the beginning — he's uniquely positioned to tell you the truth that the Democrats and the media don't want you to know, and that the Republicans are too ashamed to tell you.

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- The Republican senator who shouted: "I don't care if you have proof that Clinton raped a woman and shot her dead, you're still not going to get 67 votes!"
- The respected GOP senator who told Schippers and the House managers, "You're not going to dump this garbage on us!"
- The House Democrats who were appalled by the evidence (one even blurted out, "My God, this is indefensible. The man is a perjurer, a liar, he's obstructing justice. How can we defend him?") and yet still voted against impeachment
- What went on in private meetings during which the Republican leadership stripped Schippers and the House managers of their ability to investigate Clinton fully
- The inside story of the White House's brutal spin campaign to discredit and destroy Ken Starr — and how the media lapped it up
- Chilling new evidence about Clinton's abuse and intimidation of Kathleen Willey, Juanita Broaddrick, and Dolly Kyle Browning
- The courageous, truth-defending speech Schippers was barred from making publicly to the House Judiciary Committee, recommending impeachment of the President
- The proof: when, where, and how the President lied under oath — straight from the official transcripts

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Artist's Block

Bravo Michael Long! I am 58 years old, and for 40 of those years I have waited in vain for someone to point out that Emperor Herblock has no clothes, at least none that are funny! ("Cartoons Without Humor," Nov. 13.)

In Katherine Graham's bio, she rejoiced about her good fortune in having Block's services at the *Post*, and I remember thinking, she must not enjoy laughing during breakfast. Herblock can't even make some of the people laugh some of the time! The reason, of course: Block actually takes himself seriously, and mistakenly thinks others do also.

James Farr
Bethesda, MD

Michael Long expressed everything I've thought for many years about Herblock, although he said it much better. But I did beat him to it.

On October 22, 1970, I wrote a letter to the *Washington Post* protesting a blatant lie Herblock told in a cartoon. Then-attorney general John Mitchell had told reporters, with respect to some situation about which my memory fails me, "The danger is that citizens might resort to vigilante tactics." The *Post* quoted him correctly in a news story.

But in his cartoon, Herblock quoted Mitchell as having said, "citizens might have to resort to vigilante tactics." Here again, his "message" was not in the cleverness of the drawing but in big capital letters above Mitchell's head—confirmation that Herbert Block was as unacceptable a political cartoonist 30 years ago as he is now.

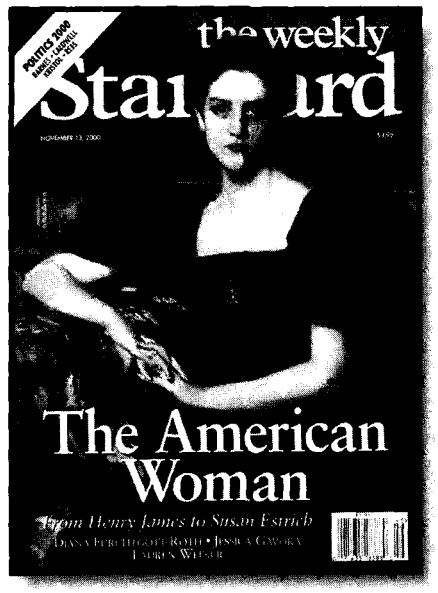
John R. Cassidy
Plantation, FL

Michael Long comes up short in his appraisal of Herblock. The first half of his article is a complaint that the cartoonist doesn't cut his cloth to the current fashion in political cartooning; and it doesn't mention Herblock's good draftsmanship. The second, which reads like a smear, says that Herblock knows only one political stance, that of the smearer. Long should recognize a kindred spirit, but this time he errs.

Many of us know Herblock as a man whose work shows much sensible concern with non-partisan issues. We recall that he was well established in his artistic field before Richard Nixon became vice president to Eisenhower in 1953. And we see little to deplore in his practice of labeling elements in his cartoons.

Paul Kunino Lynch
Kings Cross, Australia

Just a quick note of profuse thanks for Michael Long's wonderful exposure of a huge fraud—one of our culture's reigning mediocre artists. I try to



avoid him like the plague every day, and am often puzzled by his longevity. I picture a man secure in his riches, happy to toe the company line with nary a creative spark to be seen.

Philip Tatler
Falmouth, VA

What's the Big Idea?

I must respectfully disagree with William Kristol's rather long-faced evaluation of the pertinence and specificity of the recent campaign ("The Next Administration," Nov. 13). Great ideas *were* discussed; perhaps not to the level of conclusiveness we all might have wished, but I can guarantee they were discussed with just enough detail to offer hope for the future, a clear distinction between the combatants, and a working list of issues to be attacked by energetic and intelligent men and women of good conscience and honor.

There are, after all, limits to how far any of us can see into the future—especially when we try to predict the end result of all our plans. And futurists are not easily comprehended, even by their peers, much less by enough of the electorate to assure victory.

As to original and critical thinking and new ideas—where, before this campaign summarized the efforts of Republicans since 1994, did you hear of school choice on a grand scale, personal investment of part of people's Social Security payments, a tax refund treated as a return of overpayments, cracks in the monolithic 'diversity' culture, answers for the environmentalist wackos and junk scientists spoken with real courage and viable and cogent counter arguments, and, most important, a vigorous and outspoken defense of conservative thought?

For the first time in my long life, I no longer feel alone in my beliefs. That's a lot for a lot of us—win or lose in Florida.

Chuck Livingston
Fort Worth, TX

A Legacy of Lethargy

Fred Barnes has provided another key piece of the pattern with his report on how Clinton ducked leadership on the issue of reforming Social Security ("Why There's No Clinton Legacy," Nov. 13).

Clinton did the same thing on reforming Medicare, when he failed to act on the recommendations of the bipartisan Breaux Commission. The inescapable conclusion: Clinton has been a "do-nothing" president, at least in his second term.

Social Security and Medicare were the two key entitlement issues, and cried out for reform. Moreover, the stage was perfectly set with a Democratic president, a Republican Congress, and budget surpluses. A huge opportunity to go down in history with a posi-

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tive reputation, blown for lack of leadership.

The same thing is true of the economy, about which the Clinton administration brags so much. As Treasury secretary Lawrence Summers has said in recent interviews, the administration's contribution was mainly "limiting government to necessary functions, like support for basic research and building the legal infrastructure." In other words, stand aside and let Alan Greenspan do his job.

Of course, not interfering in the economy is the right thing for government to do, and it worked. But it requires no leadership, except in a recession. Isn't this the reason his poll numbers on job performance remain high? He has expended no political capital to effect anything positive for the country.

Late in his term, Clinton tried to make a mark in foreign policy, but there is no success to point to, and his Middle East policy is in shambles. Just as important, he has botched our relationships with Russia and China, which were promising when he entered office. This is also true of the military, which Clinton allowed to decline to its current state: too many missions and too few resources. Morale is low, and officers and men are leaving in droves.

Thus, Clinton is likely to be remembered mostly for his personal scandals and for the corruption and lawlessness of the agencies under his control.

MIKE LION
McLean, VA

LOVING HATE-CRIME LAW

THE GENERAL RESISTANCE on the part of conservatives to enacting hate-crime laws is unfortunate (Jackson Toby, "Hate-Crime Laws: What's Not to Like," Oct. 30). The added dimension of a hate crime is to intimidate a group of people or to seek vengeance against a group by choosing a random victim. This is not senseless violence—it is clearly premeditated and carefully targeted even though the victim is not known by the criminal.

There need not be any muzzling of free speech by such a law. Nor need there be a fear of approaching the slippery slope that leads to a police state. Only preexisting hateful behavior should be evidence that such a compound crime has been committed.

Although such existing or proposed legislation tends to be vague and poorly worded, the public policy is sound. And since when have legislators gotten it right the first time? A hate-crime law sends a clear message that all Americans expressly reject intimidation or vengeance. Conservative vigilance would ensure a carefully crafted law. Conservative opposition or abdication would grant liberals free reign to wreak havoc.

Many argue there are already enough laws. But we see in practice that prosecutors are often prepared to plea bargain for reduced sentences without noting that the criminal demonstrated by his actions his intent to intimidate or persecute. While capital punishment is a special exception, first degree capital charges are often reduced to avoid the maximum penalty. Thus, the idea that "dead is dead" is a bit of unneeded sophistry. A good law would call attention to the added dimension of intimidation in certain criminal acts and seek to prevent the justice system from missing this aggravating factor.

I suspect that a knee-jerk conservative has never been the target of a hate crime. But as a visibly Orthodox Jew, I have seen the potential violation of my basic rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Many thoughtful, compassionate conservatives can commiserate.

NATHANIEL SEGAL
Northbrook, IL

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the weekly Standard

The Gore Coup

"Well, we just have to win, then." —Bill Clinton, concluding that candor about Monica Lewinsky might destroy his presidency.
"I'm not like George Bush. If he wins or loses, life goes on. I'll do anything to win." —Al Gore, explaining this year's campaign.

As we go to press, state circuit court judge Terry P. Lewis has decided that Florida and the nation need not sit still while the Democratic party attempts to manufacture an Al Gore presidency from after-the-fact "recounts" of ambiguous or altogether invalid Election Day ballots. But the state supreme court has enjoined Lewis's ruling pending an appeal scheduled for Monday, November 20.

We're sure of this much: Should Judge Lewis eventually be upheld, all who cherish the integrity of American law will be entitled to celebrate. And yet, even then . . . how close we will have come to having the central processes of our democracy upended by the fanatic ambition of a single demagogue. And what glaring weaknesses in our politics will have been revealed by the astonishing extent of the Gore assault. So, yes, celebrate if things end honorably. But also remember this:

Al Gore's attempted coup has exactly tracked the trajectory of the Monica Lewinsky episode, his mentor's own triumph over ancient taboos of American public life. And an all-too-familiar scandal narcosis has already set in across the country, for Gore has pursued his goal with a speed and cynical genius that Bill Clinton never dreamed of. Once again, the overarching grossness of the thing has been obscured in a succession of televised "developments," each dominated by the guilty party's super-litigator frontmen, who insist that ultimate justice must turn on microscopic obscurities of the statute books. What constitutes an "error in the vote tabulation" under Title IX, Chapter 102.166(5) of the Florida code? May a "county canvassing board" consider a "pregnant chad" on an "undercounted ballot" the binding expression of a "voter's intent"? And if such questions are properly answered, does it not become obvious that our boy is *defending the Constitution*?

With hardly a peep of disunity, the regular army of Democratic brahmins and activists and "intellectuals" has once again heard this bell and begun barking whatever daily dishonesties are approved by the central office. Which has once again guaranteed that only Republicans will be left to mumble back the countervailing truth. Which has once again persuaded the mainstream media to cover the spectacle as they would any other essentially "partisan" dispute: with only passing attention to its genuine origins, and an idiot's agnosticism about what conclusion is to be preferred. Which agnosticism has now been broadcast everywhere, so that you can practically feel it in the air. What not long ago would have been completely unthinkable—the outcome of a presidential election formally reversed to conform to the losing side's conception of "popular will"—is beginning to seem already thunk.

As indeed in some sense it *has* already been thunk. Two years ago, a sitting American president decided he would "just have to win," despite the fact that all signs pointed to his complicity in an impressive series of felonies. He did wind up winning, of course. It is really no surprise, then, the precedent for such ugly triumph firmly established, that Bill Clinton's understudy would conclude that he himself can and should "do anything to win" the White House. The only surprise is that we would find Gore still reaching for "anything to win" even after it is clear he's *lost*—and that he would make the grab without suffering universal condemnation.

By mid-afternoon on Election Day, word had reached Nashville of exit polls showing an extraordinarily close race, nationwide and particularly in Florida. Nashville had also become aware of anecdotal reports that a handful of voters in Palm Beach were complaining about the design of their local punch-card ballot. Gore's men knew nothing more than that. But it was enough. Before the polls closed in Florida, phone banks were calling registered Democrats in Palm Beach to warn that "you may have voted for the wrong candidate for president." And twelve hours later, at 5 A.M.—only after it emerged that Florida would in fact be decisive in the Electoral College, and that the state had been lost by fewer than 1,800 votes—Al Gore authorized his senior aides to squeeze profit from the Palm Beach frenzy they had preemptively whipped up. At an emergency meeting in his campaign headquarters, senior Democratic strategists resolved that recounts of the Florida vote would be demanded—on the basis of "ballot irregularity" allegations they could not (and still can't) substantiate.

Gore lawyers have since argued two things: first, that

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Palm Beach's punch cards were "illegal," and the county must therefore conduct its entire election over again; second, that Election Night computer tabulations in several other Florida counties might have missed some crucial number of votes—which suspicion, they claimed, was legally sufficient to justify a hand inspection of every ballot cast in those jurisdictions. Of course, Palm Beach's punch cards were not illegal, as we explained last week. And nothing in Florida law, honestly construed, otherwise contemplates what Team Gore has generally proposed: that an apparently defeated candidate be permitted to direct an explicitly partisan, extra-innings treasure hunt through the spoiled or incomplete ballots of voters he *guesses* meant to support him. For bravely sticking to her guns on this point, Florida secretary of state Katherine Harris has now been systematically smeared by flunkies of the vice president. They are wrong and Harris is right, but what should that matter? As Gore's campaign chairman, Bill Daley, has lately announced, mere "technicalities"—like the law—should no longer determine our presidential elections.

They should be determined instead, apparently, by naked thievery. Ask yourself: Why has public opinion not angrily rebelled against Gore's transparently self-interested call for hand recounts in Florida? Because Bush's margin of victory there—not counting absentee ballots from overseas—remained a paper-thin 300 votes late last week, and most folks think it common sense that we make sure we've got it nailed before such a puny number elects our president. Okay, but how is it that Bush's popular vote advantage ever got so small in the first place, when authoritative Election Night tallies had given him a lead nearly six times as large? Well, you say, Florida's mandatory next-day recount of its ballots—conducted impartially, by machine—corrected for various simple errors and glitches, and quickly produced more reliable figures. Which by purest chance broke 80 percent in Al Gore's direction.

No. Virtually impossible. And it is among the most amazing aspects of this most amazing historical event that so little attention has so far been paid to the impossibility.

There are 67 counties in Florida. The mandatory recount in one of them, Pinellas, suggested innocent human error on Election Night; ballot officials had mistakenly fed one set of punch cards through the computer twice, and had never processed another set at all. Amended returns from Pinellas produced a net gain of 343 votes for Gore. Mandatory recounts in 63 other Florida counties shifted things this way and that, each of them negligibly and at random, as statistical probability would have indicated. Together, these 63 counties gave Gore an additional net gain of fewer than 200 votes. And we have thus cleanly accounted for roughly a third of the lead Bush lost immediately following the election.

The other two thirds came entirely from three remaining counties. And the situation in each of them fairly stinks of impropriety or outright corruption.

A recount in Volusia County lopped nearly 100 votes off the gap between Bush and Gore. Officials there explain that they suddenly discovered 320 ballots they'd missed the first time. Which would be fine, perhaps. Except that last Thursday, state attorney general Bob Butterworth, who happens to be Gore's Florida campaign chairman, phoned Volusia's elections board and "requested" they perform a second recount, by hand. They agreed. And by the time they were done, 264 previously counted absentee ballots had . . . disappeared. And Al Gore, voilà, had gained a new chunk of votes (not yet certified, thank heavens, by Katherine Harris). Very fishy.

Fishier still is Gadsden County, where last Wednesday the canvassing board met privately, in violation of state law, and examined more than 2,000 ballots that had been rejected by voting machines because they each were marked for more than one presidential candidate. Gadsden, one canvassing board member admits, then "reconstructed" certain of these ballots—again, in violation of state law—and accorded 170 of them to Gore.

And fishiest of all is Palm Beach County, now notorious for the standardless, on-again-off-again manual recount sought by its grotesquely partisan canvassing board. It should be notorious for something else. On Election Day, Palm Beach voters cast only about 7 percent of the state's presidential ballots. But the putatively "neutral" machine recount Palm Beach conducted 24 hours later all by itself produced fully 45 percent of Gore's subsequent climb toward a Florida plurality: a net shift of 682 votes. How could this be? No other county experienced results anything close to these. Much larger Broward County, for example, ran its ballots through the machines a second time and changed just a single vote—in Bush's favor.

In our bones, we're pretty sure what happened here. In the middle of the night on November 8, Democratic ultraloyalists like the people who run elections in Volusia, Gadsden, and Palm Beach counties watched a fevered Bill Daley announce that things were still close in Florida—and that his party's campaign would "continue" until the rectification of unspecified "irregularities" in that state made Al Gore president. The ultraloyalists read this hint for what it was. And next, they set about, fast as lightning, before anyone was watching, doing "anything to win."

We're pretty sure, too, on whose instructions Daley issued his hint. Every Florida machination, after all, has been engineered by Al Gore personally. "He's making every decision," his aides now brag. "This is totally him."

In our next issue, we hope to be commenting on the news that one court or another has finally called a halt to the Al Gore coup of election year 2000. The news will please us. But still we will wonder: How on earth did such a man, leading such a crowd of knaves, in such a disreputable and anti-constitutional effort, ever come within a million miles of the American presidency?

—David Tell, for the Editors

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The Politics of Personal Destruction

Like Bill Clinton, Al Gore needed to create a villain. Too bad for Katherine Harris. **BY JOHN PODHORETZ**

AP / Wide World Photos

In the person of Florida secretary of state Katherine Harris, the Gore camp and its followers have merged the two key villains of the impeachment battle into one. For the purposes of Gore's postelection spin, Florida's top elections official has been made into an amalgam of Kenneth Starr and Linda Tripp. Harris has been subjected to the same sort of political and personal vilification—though, if anything, the onslaught against her has been far more concentrated. There is no evidence Harris has done anything to deserve this but faithfully execute the laws governing ballot recounts in her state. Too bad for her those laws have proved an impediment to Al Gore's ambition.

A contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *John Podhoretz is a columnist for the* New York Post.

Like Starr, she has been characterized as a ruthlessly partisan Republican who has unjustifiably and unlawfully seized control of the American political system when she really ought to have recused herself in the first place. Chris Lehane of the Gore campaign said she was "in the finest tradition of a Soviet commissar"—a line of attack familiar from impeachment days. Clinton backer Gene Lyons once described Starr's staff as "junior varsity commissars."

Lars-Erik Nelson of the New York *Daily News* said that Harris "is trying to steal the election for George W. Bush . . . this is a mugging." This argument is a near-echo of the case made against Kenneth Starr that he was trying to undo the will of the American people as expressed in the 1996 election. Tom Oliphant of the *Boston Globe* referred to Harris's "astonishing abuse of authority"—again echoing the anti-Starr talking points of 1998, according to which the independent counsel was abusing his powers by poking into matters that would not have triggered legal action in other cases.

And like Starr, who Democrats insisted should recuse himself from the Clinton case because he had represented a tobacco company, Harris has been called on to recuse herself because of her participation in the Bush campaign—which has been deemed prima facie evidence of a lack of integrity. Nelson even compared her unfavorably with Jeb Bush: "The Florida governor and George W.'s younger brother had sense enough to recuse himself from any role in the disputed Florida vote because of the obvious conflict of interest. Harris has just as much conflict . . ."

Harris has "as much conflict" as the candidate's own *brother*?

But it was not enough to smear her in Starr-like ways. No, the Gore partisans have also made implicit comparisons between Harris and the person whose reputation suffered the most during the Lewinsky scandal—Linda Tripp. Like Tripp, Harris has been characterized as an ugly witch with runaway personal ambitions—and as a criminal to boot.

Both Paul Begala on NBC and Margery Eagan in the *Boston Herald* likened Harris to the Disney villainess who wants to kill Dalmatians to make them into fur coats. Begala said she looked "like Cruella De Vil coming to steal the puppies." Eagan not only used the Cruella De Vil analogy, but also said Harris was reminiscent of cross-dressing freaks like "Dr. Richard Sharpe, the transvestite and alleged wife killer. Or Marilyn Manson. . . . Or Leona Helmsley on Halloween."

And like Leona Helmsley, Gore partisans say, she's a felon. The Jesse Jackson of the American legal system, Alan Dershowitz, got himself on a plane down to Florida last week in time to tell CNN's Wolf Blitzer: "She's corrupt. She's the woman who has had all kinds of problems. She's had to pay back $20,000 of laundered money. She's had all kind of corruption allegations about expenditures of money. She's a crook. She's a crook and an operative of the Bush campaign."

An embarrassed Blitzer interjected: "I just want to point out some of the things you were saying were allegations, not necessarily proven facts involving the secretary of state of Florida."

To which Dershowitz replied: "Some of them were proven."

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Even that slimy formulation is a lie. The matter to which Dershowitz referred was an illegal campaign-finance scheme hatched by a Florida insurance company, which gave $400,000 to 96 different local candidates in 1994. Harris's campaign for the state legislature received $20,600, the largest single amount, and her campaign manager was described as an "unindicted co-conspirator." But there is no evidence that Harris herself had any knowledge of the scheme, and neither she nor any of the other 95 candidates who received the contributions was indicted or even criticized by the prosecutors.

For this non-offense, she was slandered as a money launderer by Alan Dershowitz, whom it would be almost impossible to slander.

The most serious charge against Harris, and one that actually dealt with her professional conduct, was that her behavior last week was "arbitrary and capricious," in the words of Gore campaign adviser Warren Christopher. As a matter of hard fact, it was anything but. What Harris did was hew closely to Florida election law as it was written. The deadline she enforced for reporting results was written into the law, and there were no guidelines for ignoring it. In addition, the statute governing manual recounts seems to have been drafted to suggest they take place only when some calamity befalls the voting machines or the computer software used in some counties to count votes.

It would have been perfectly fair to argue that Harris was being hair-splittingly legalistic in both the imposition of the deadline and the guidance she gave to the canvassing commissions in Broward, Dade, and Palm Beach counties about whether they should proceed with manual recounts. But under no definition of either term was she "arbitrary" or "capricious."

But then, the purpose of the campaign to defame Katherine Harris had nothing to do with truth or fairness. It was a way of rallying the Gore troops by giving them a focal point for their runaway emotions—a manufactured bad guy like Emmanuel Goldstein in George Orwell's *1984*, whose image appears on television screens every day for two minutes to allow the shackled folk of Oceania to vent their misplaced rage.

It was also a bald-faced effort to intimidate Harris into reversing course, with the all-but-spoken threat that she would become a dehumanized, depersonalized force of evil instead of a local official in Florida who looked to the letter of the law for guidance at a time when we needed the law the most. ♦

Michael Ramirez

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Look Who's Race-Baiting Now

How Al Gore and the Democrats got out the black vote. BY MATTHEW REES

ON THE EVENING of November 15, Al Gore took a break from wrangling over the election outcome to telephone the country's highest-rated black radio host, Tom Joyner. The call was to thank Joyner for his help in getting voters registered and motivating them to go to the polls. So grateful was Gore that when Joyner asked if he'd come on his radio show the next morning, Gore not only agreed, but put Tipper on the air as well. It was their first interview since the election.

Gore's gratitude is understandable. Without the efforts of Joyner and a number of other black advocates, he would certainly have lost the election. Not only was black turnout up in a number of key states, including Florida, but 90 percent of blacks voted for Gore, the highest black support for a presidential candidate since Lyndon Johnson received 94 percent in 1964 (even Bill Clinton received only 84 percent four years ago). Had George W. Bush won even 12 percent of the black vote—the rough average for GOP presidential candidates in recent elections—he would have walked away with Florida, and perhaps some other states as well.

This is the second election in a row in which Republicans have fared considerably worse than expected, and on both occasions one reason has been higher-than-expected black turnout. Two years ago, Democrats scored upset victories in gubernatorial races in South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama thanks to a major mobilization effort overseen by a little-known Democratic operative named Donna Brazile. For her efforts, she was named Gore's political director last year, and was later promoted to campaign manager. In these capacities, she helped neutralize Bill Bradley's effort to win over black voters, who loom large in the Democratic presidential primaries, and in the general election she directed a campaign to boost black registration and voting.

Given Brazile's prominence, and Gore's need to generate a high black turnout, it was unsurprising that he visited three black churches the weekend before the election. And this was no last-minute appeal to a group he'd ignored. During the campaign, Gore appeared before blacks far more often than any other racial or ethnic group or special-interest lobby. He also pandered in the worst way. It was before a black audience that he said Bush had pledged to appoint "strict constructionists" to the courts, and that strict constructionists had once considered each black three-fifths of a person.

Clinton, though out of the spotlight, also did what he could to boost black enthusiasm for Gore. He appeared on the Tom Joyner show a few days before the election and touted Gore as "the next best thing" to himself (the comment undoubtedly helped Gore with blacks, though privately Gore's aides winced). Clinton also had 150 black political leaders to the White House on October 27 to sing Gore's praises (and his own), and visited a number of black churches in the final weeks of the campaign.

According to David Bositis of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a black-oriented think tank, there's never been as big an effort to mobilize black voters as there was this year. It included many of the usual suspects, like Jesse Jackson, who boasted after the election, "It's the most I've ever really campaigned." But Jackson, who's always been more interested in TV time than the nuts and bolts work of politics, did little to boost turnout. Instead,

Matthew Rees is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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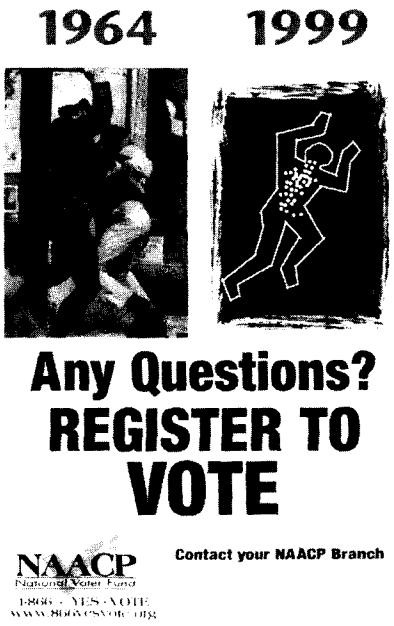
most of the credit goes to a recently created arm of the NAACP called the National Voter Fund.

In just four months, it spent approximately $10 million to build an organization spanning 13 states. It began by registering voters—207,000 in all—and then turned its attention to demonizing Bush, who as late as mid-July was the choice of 17 percent of blacks in a national NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll. It did this through a variety of radio and television ads, direct-mail pieces, and literature drops. Ostensibly nonpartisan, the effort was in fact an adjunct of the Gore campaign, concentrating its activity and advertising in swing states—something the IRS may want to investigate in a Bush administration, hints *New York Post* columnist Michael Meyers.

One of the television ads, in which the daughter of James Byrd Jr. all but blamed Bush for her father's death at the hands of white racists, received considerable criticism. But some other National Voter Fund materials were equally mendacious. One radio ad said, "There are many ways intimidation was, and still is, used to keep African Americans from voting. Mobs, guns, and Jim Crow. Ropes, dogs, lies, and hoses." Another radio ad ripped into Texas for supposedly spending more money on prisons than schools, and urged listeners to contact Bush about it. And a flier headlined "Stopped Again?" pictured a black motorist handing his driver's license to a policeman, accompanied by the claim that "George W. Bush says the U.S. government shouldn't do anything about racial profiling."

Complementing these ads were a series of telephone calls to one million black households. Four of them were from telemarketers urging people to vote, while two were taped messages, from Joyner and Clinton. And on Election Day, the National Voter Fund's field staff knocked on doors and offered voters rides to the polls.

Similar activities were undertaken by groups like the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, which toiled in 83 cities, in 29 states, to register 100,000 voters and encourage turnout. Its officials worked in conjunction with representatives of Black Entertainment Television, who visited 37 historically black colleges over nine weeks to energize voters, and with rap impresario Russell Simmons, who launched a mobilization effort called Rap the Vote. Members of the Congressional Black Caucus, a group not known for successful voter mobilization efforts, sponsored a two-week bus tour to a number of contested congressional districts. "The black



political infrastructure came together," says the University of Maryland's Ron Walters, who served as a top aide in Jesse Jackson's 1984 presidential campaign. "It's much more powerful than ever before."

And the Republicans? Bush appeared before a number of black audiences, though that may have been as much to soothe the conscience of GOP moderates as it was to win over blacks. And he did not seem to get any credit for having Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice as top advisers. His favorability rating among blacks was 43 percent last year, according to a Joint Center poll, but fell to 29 percent this year. And Bush finished with just 9 percent of the black vote, prompting Democratic pollster Ron Lester to say, "He lost ground as black voters got to know him."

As for the Republican National Committee, it spent over $1 million on black radio ads, but it's not clear they had much impact. While touching on a number of issue-oriented themes, like school choice, the ads also candidly acknowledged the party's low standing among blacks. In one, the narrator said, "We know we have a long way to go to gain your trust," and in another a voice said, "Look, we know what you think Republicans are like. But we're working hard to show you who we really are."

The outcome was nonetheless exasperating for Republican officials. "There's this huge monolithic voting bloc that will absolutely not consider any kind of Republican position on issues," Richard Bennett, Maryland's GOP chairman, told the *Baltimore Sun* after the election. (Maryland is an extreme example of the race problem facing Republicans. Bush won the state's white voters 51 percent to 45 percent, but thanks to heavy black turnout lost the total vote by 17 percentage points.)

Nationally, blacks were 10 percent of the electorate, about the same as four years ago. But this is somewhat misleading, because in some states the increase was considerable and impacted Senate races. In Florida, the black percentage of the total electorate rose from 10 percent four years ago to 15 percent this year, which all but guaranteed the victory of Democrat Bill Nelson over Republican Bill McCollum. In Missouri, the increase was from 5 percent to 12 percent, contributing another Democratic victory, that of the late Mel Carnahan, defeating John Ashcroft. And in Tennessee, the increase was from 13 percent to 18 percent, though the state still supported Bush over its native son, Gore.

Precisely what Republicans can do to offset the advantage Democrats enjoy from massive black turnout is unclear, but they better figure it out soon. Control of Congress hinges on it, and the White House may, too. ♦

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Kill All the Lawyers, Part 9

The Florida fiasco is what you would expect given our national penchant for suing. BY WOODY WEST

GOING TO LAW, as the phrase used to be—that is, suing the rascal whose sheep are in your meadow and cows in your corn—is a hallowed tradition in this land of liberty. In our time, it has become more than a tradition, rather a national pastime, ranking just under baseball and a click above 1-900 phone sex from the office.

The spectacle these last days in Florida is but the capstone on an edifice of litigiousness that has grown to prodigious height in recent years. We sue each other and corporations and governmental institutions from a sense of outraged principle, for monetary gain, and out of plain cussedness. It thus comes as little surprise that our national habit of adjudicatory fervor should end up deciding a presidential election.

Alas, there are no grounds for optimism so long as the law schools continue producing lawyers like litters on puppy farms. As puppies grow into dogs, so do a fair portion of the legal apprentices advance over the years to be judges. And a disconcerting portion of these judges who learned their lawyerly bobbing and weaving in contemporary law schools have a utopian itch which they relentlessly scratch on the bench.

Forget Florida and all its unseemly passions for a moment. Consider only a single recent news cycle, as we colorfully say in the biz. There was a flurry of results illustrating this trend, rulings that called for an aspirin, if not stronger pharmaceutical assistance.

Woody West is associate editor of the Washington Times.

A judge in Massachusetts ruled that prohibiting a 15-year-old boy from wearing female clothing to school amounted to "the stifling of a person's selfhood merely because it causes some members of the community discomfort." The school had referred him to a therapist who diagnosed the lad with "gender identity disorder," and that presumably accounted for his preference to arrive for class wearing wigs, high heels, and padded bras. The judge held that the boy could wear any clothing or accessories that any other male or female student may wear, which is about as inclusive as it gets.

Then there was the award of $2 million in punitive damages and $1 in compensatory penalty to a young woman by a jury in North Carolina against Duke University. She was dumped from the football team for which she wished to be a kicker solely because she was a female, she testified. The university claimed that the young woman wasn't talented enough to kick for a NCAA Division I team.

Yeah, right, the jury snorted—her sex was the motivating factor. The victorious attorney piously pontificated that the Duke coach "chose not to see her skills. He chose only to see her as a woman." Let's suppose, however, that Brunhilde had made the Duke varsity: Given the feminist tactic of, first, to whine, and, second, to sue the bleeps, if she had a kick blocked, doubtless she'd charge there was a "hostile working environment"—and call her lawyer.

But, wait, there's more—as they say on late-night TV ads. This suit was filed by a guest of the state of Maryland (45 years for kidnapping and assault; scheduled release date Feb. 14, 2015). He is suing a typewriter company for $29,000 claiming he would have won parole if—his

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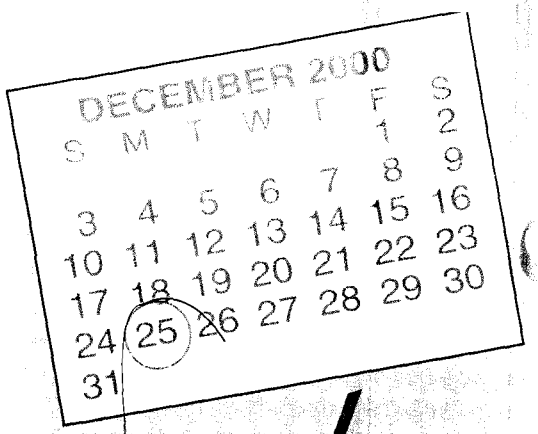

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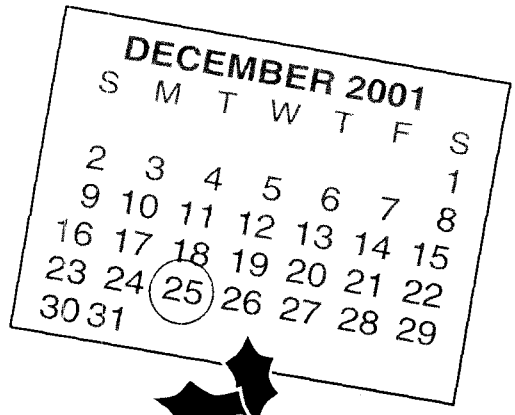

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typewriter ribbon hadn't broken.

The plaintiff from his "strong lodgings"—as Dickens put it—said he purchased the typewriter and several ribbons, and each was defective. He realized they were defective only after inserting them to begin typing his brief. He asserted he was denied parole as a result. Included in the $29,000 he is seeking is $8,000 for fees for an attorney—and indeed he has found one to take his odd case, frivolous as it might seem to those not versed in the arcana of the legal tribe.

This suit obviously has a stunning potential in our wildly communicative culture, doesn't it?

Fax manufacturers will be at risk when a last-minute contract submission fails to reach its destination because of an alleged glitch in the machine's viscera. Laptop makers will be hauled to the bar of justice after supposedly vital documents vanish terminally into cyberspace because of a poor placement of the "file" key. And cell phone users may be motivated to go to law for any call they can assert diverted their lives a nanosecond from some imperative connection.

This is a rich vein of high-grade ore of which the surface has only been scratched by the ingenuous Maryland felon. It might be especially useful for those who scribble for rent money—but public opinion likely holds that journalists deserve scant sympathy and less representation.

There must be a moral in these and other proliferating instances of promiscuous going to law. But in a society that seems to have raised litigation to a prominence both of psychic satisfaction and entertainment—how many of the *Judge Judy* variety of television shows are there now?—it's probably not worth digging for it. Which may be why lawyer jokes will never go out of fashion.

As it happens, there is quite a good one, if well aged, in Max Byrd's new novel *Grant* (nicely written, by the way). As every schoolboy knows, Ulysses S. Grant was forced to go to work in his father's Galena, Ill., leather-goods store just before the Civil War, having failed up to then in every enterprise he essayed, including the army, of course.

One chilly evening he stops at the general store downtown. A group of Galena lawyers are sitting around the stove when they notice the shabby Grant. "Stranger here, ain't you?" one asks him. Grant says he is.

"Traveled far to get here?" the lawyer inquires. Grant replies, "Far enough."

Then the lawyer adds, "Look pretty rough, looks as though you might have traveled through hell."

"I have," replies Grant.

"Well, how did you find things down there?"

"Oh, much the same as in Galena—lawyers nearest the fire." ♦

THEO TSCHUY
Dangerous Diplomacy
Foreword by Simon Wiesenthal

The Story of Carl Lutz, Rescuer of 62,000 Hungarian Jews

"*Dangerous Diplomacy* is the thoroughly engrossing account of arguably the most heroic Christian to rescue Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe. By tenacity, nerve, bluff, and incredible courage, Carl Lutz succeeded against all odds in rescuing no fewer than 62,000 Jews in Budapest. . . . Raoul Wallenberg's story is better known, but it was the Swiss Consul Carl Lutz who successfully undertook the largest rescue operation ever attempted at that time. An amazing story and a great read!"

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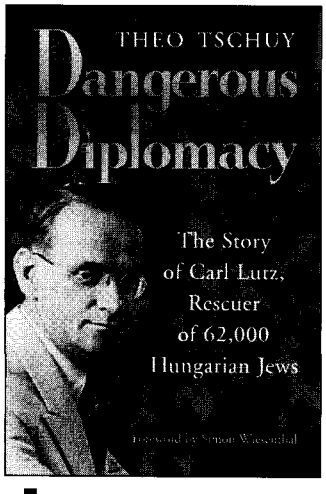

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Palm Beach Bingo

From the amphitheater, to the operations center, to the courthouses of Florida, it was all chad talk this week, all the time.

By Matt Labash

West Palm Beach, Fla.

MONDAY, 4 P.M. In life, there are but three certainties: (a) If you envy your friends, they will succeed; (b) You will pay taxes, then die, then pay a death tax; and (c) Wherever three or more cameras are gathered, Jesse Jackson will be in their midst.

So it is this balmy evening in the palm-laden Meyer Amphitheater, which abuts West Palm Beach's Intercoastal Waterway. Kicking off week two of the post-presidential election fiasco, Jackson is back for yet another rally. Last week, Democrats had suggested he leave, but after observing the Sabbath—perhaps as a sop to Palm Beach's populous Jewish electorate—Jackson is back. The amphitheater is the kind of place where you normally find frozen-mocha-sipping yuppies taking in a smooth-jazz concert. But tonight the verdant venue is full of "the disenfranchised," as they now call themselves—victims of the butterfly ballot who regurgitate all manner of baseless conspiracies that they think entitle them to a revote. Jackson calls for a three-block protest march to the supervisor of elections' office, where the blinds are drawn and nobody's home thanks to all the unwanted attention.

Last week's street demonstrations seemed like the result of genuine voter outrage, but now the pros have taken over. The crowd is armed with identical Gore/Lieberman propaganda, bearing the brands of everyone from the NAACP to Planned Parenthood. Cher has just canceled her appearance, but there's still an undeniable star presence. There's pink-haired "Medical Marijuana Barbie," striving to legitimize pot-use in a "positive, non-threatening way." And there's lip-ringed Carl, who insists he, like Gore, was robbed of votes in his write-in campaign for president, though upon further interrogation, he admits he's 18 years old and too young to serve. "When I become president," he promises, "that's the first thing I'll change."

After a Democratic county commissioner stokes the crowd with the confidence-inspiring "message to America" that "we are not sunstroked," Jesse takes the stage in his walking shoes and Idi-Amin-style safari suit. If you close your eyes and forget all the upscale boutiques and martini-bars, it could be Selma circa 1965. Jackson's words sound inspiring, if slightly confused. "We're at the fork in the road," he tells the crowd. "We must not choose the fork!" His stage directions are equally unclear. The crowd is commanded to fill nearby Flagler Drive, but as the street runs two lanes in opposite directions, nobody knows which side of the median strip they are working. They push on valiantly (on both sides of the street) until Jackson shows up to consolidate them in the northbound lane.

There is evidence Jackson's lost a step, as an aide runs ahead to caution the police-driven pace car that the Reverend is suffocating on its fumes. Young protesters holding a Gore/Lieberman sign jump offsides and get ahead of Jackson, who fiercely waves them back. This march, it's clear, is about something a lot bigger than Al Gore and Joe Lieberman. It's about Jesse Jackson.

Rounding the turn onto North Olive in front of the elections office, Jackson is greeted by a steely band of Republican protesters, who have staked out prime heckling territory so they can scream "Go home, Jesse." As one Republican does so with a megaphone, Jackson partisans wittily reply, "You go home, asshole." A who-should-go-home argument ensues for several minutes, the back-and-forth becoming so rancorous that Jackson, fearful of violence, commands the crowd to reconvene back at the amphitheater. The Republicans' de facto leader, a Las Vegas roofer named Wade Whitaker, thinks it's all a trick to force Republicans to relinquish their turf. I point out to him that this would be a pretty elaborate ruse, as Jackson would have to convince 2,000 people to participate in a head-fake. Wade ponders this for a moment, then raises a fist. "On to the amphitheater!" he cries.

Wade is accompanied by a roughneck band of black Republicans from North Miami who call themselves Freedom Fighters International. Headed by a club singer named Michael Maurice Symonette, the FFI is alerting anyone who will listen that it was Democrats who lynched

Matt Labash is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Newsmakers

Palm Beach County commissioner Carol Roberts

their ancestors, that the Gore family held slaves, and that Jackson is a "house Negro." This kind of talk makes them stand out in the crowd. Back at the amphitheater, Gore loyalists collapse around them, swear at them, and joust at their anti-Jackson signs with signs of their own. From a distance, it looks like a drunk puppet show. Wade, Michael, and Co. decide to take an early leave after seeing one of their members thumped on the head, having their signs dismantled, and getting repeatedly threatened. Jesse, meantime, is bringing home the message that in an election, no voice should be stilled. "It's helpin' time; it's healin' time; it's holy time," he says. For those of us who've endured three of his rallies in less than a week, it's Miller time.

TUESDAY, 11:33 A.M. Historically, Republicans have grown agitated at the idea of a state's decisions being countermanded by overfed, underworked Washington bureaucrats. But if there's anything this post-election morass has taught devolutionists, it's that while the theory of state government is a fine thing, the reality is a circus like the one in Florida.

In Volusia County, for instance, an elderly poll worker showed up during a recount with a bag of ballots he'd forgotten in his car. Then there's Palm Beach's newest state representative Irv Slosberg, who campaigned by handing out corned beef sandwiches to voters, and who might face charges after getting caught with a Votamatic machine (used to punch holes in ballots) in his car. Most discouraging, especially to Palm Beach residents who've been whining that theirs was a confusing ballot, is this underreported tidbit from the *Palm Beach Post*: 15 Florida counties had worse ballot-error rates than Palm Beach's 6.39 percent, giving new life to widespread suspicions about sunstroke.

Nowhere, however, are things more confusing than at Palm Beach County's Emergency Operations Center, where ballot recounts are constantly on-again or off-again, depending on the whims of various judges and canvassing board commissioners: Theresa LePore (who okayed the butterfly ballot), Judge Charles Burton, and Gore-partisan Carol Roberts (whom Republicans have accused of the highest crime imaginable: fondling chads during last Saturday's recount). As my cabbie wheels me into the operations center, which he says is used for "disasters like hurricanes—and our elections," Jesse Jackson is already working the parking lot full of reporters. He is wearing yesterday's clothes, which seems appropriate, as he is fighting yesterday's battles.

The edifice itself is all light-tile and aquamarine trim, making it look like the inside of Gloria Estefan's bathroom. Inside the building, potbellied cameramen in a plexiglassed room of video monitors keep one eye on *The Price is Right* and the other on the empty chamber, a NASA-style control room where the bipartisan ballot-counters will reside. In front of the building among the satellite trucks and makeshift media cabanas is an elevated platform with a table and microphones, where the canvassing board ("Larry, Moe, and Curly" to some reporters) conduct their frequent meetings in accordance with Florida's sunshine laws. They repeatedly announce that they are waiting for a state supreme court ruling or a circuit court ruling or whatever else they need to continue or discontinue their ballot recounts. Generally, they don't seem to know the answer to anything. It's enough to give sunshine a bad name.

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12:50 P.M. If there is little action at the operations center, there is nothing but action at the Palm Beach County circuit court. Courtroom 4-D currently belongs to Judge Jorge Labarga, who had the election cases dumped on him upon returning from lunch, after five other judges had recused themselves—three of them in one day. Perhaps they had genuine conflicts of interest. Or perhaps they just didn't want the headache of deciding when dimpled chads become hanging chads (until last week, Judge Labarga says, he thought a chad was a "country in Africa"). More likely still is that they didn't want to deal with what is known around the courthouse as the "gang-bang," a legal term of art describing the 10 or so lawsuits filed by angry, confused, uncoordinated Gore voters. (One of them complains that his 12-year-old son who accompanied him steered his stylus to Pat Buchanan's punch hole.)

From a difficulty standpoint, making it into the courtroom is on a par with crashing Studio 54 during Bianca Jagger's birthday party. Guarding the velvet rope are surly bailiffs with Village People mustaches who enjoy separating lawyers from their clients and reporters from their photographers, and who generally deny admittance to all who would enter. It's understandable that they're intoxicated with their new power. They haven't seen this much excitement since the early '80s Pulitzer divorce case, when Roxanne shocked some of the world's most decadent citizens after it was alleged she had congress with a trumpet.

AFP

Journalists are shunted to an overflow room in the courthouse cafeteria. As we crowd around a TV set, heavily rouged newsbunnies take all the choice seats and someone draws shut the accordion room dividers. Courthouse workers apparently don't wish to look at journalists—at least not while they're eating. As Judge Labarga mounts the bench, he seems overwhelmed. He is uncertain of names and claims and what the exact motion is before him, which may not be his fault. In the media room, he has plenty of company. Throughout the week, there is a nagging sense that you are missing something important. With multiple cases filed everywhere from circuit court to the supreme court, from Tallahassee to Atlanta, new legal developments change the story nearly every hour. That is why, back at the operations center, most reporters stay glued to CNN. They are America's news leaders; we are America's news followers.

5 P.M. Back in the operations center parking lot, another one of the sunshine press conferences commences. Republican and Democratic plants are thick on the ground, and when they cheer and jeer during the canvassing board's meeting (they are still trying to decide what to do about recounting ballots), the board's Judge Burton threatens to clear this outdoor courtroom. Outside the compound, I wait for a cab with Marco Bardazzi, a correspondent for ANSA Italian news. We commiserate about the difficulty of covering the multifaceted story. "Eeet's very deeefeecult to explain to reader what chad is," he says in a Roberto Benigni accent. "We thought we had the worst election system in the world. Now we are happy because someone has worst than ours."

Standing next to us on the curb is a perky Bush supporter, holding a sign that says "Pray for our nation." A beat-up El Camino drives by with the window rolled down. "Go home, asshole," the driver yells, picking up on the theme of the Jackson rally debate. "I'm very happy I'm leaving," says Bardazzi, as he steps into his cab.

WEDNESDAY, 9 A.M. In the courthouse cafeteria/media room, it's all chad talk, all the time. Whether it be hanging, pregnant, or dimpled chads, we take child-like glee in our new vocabulary, awed that the election hangs on little paper punchouts that sound like the name of some failed garage band (please welcome, the Hanging Chads!). Today's business involves the Florida Democratic party's lawsuit to force the counting of dimpled chads (indented, but not perforated, punch cards). Labarga has been on the case only two days, but already he wonders aloud if "there's anybody in Florida who has not sued in this case" and he seems at wit's end. Instead of recusing himself like all the other judges, however, he mocks and cajoles the phalanx of barristers before him. "We've got 50 lawyers here and nobody hired a court reporter?" he asks incredulously, before calling a recess so one can be hired. Watching lawyers get ridiculed—there are worse ways to pass a day.

12:35 P.M. In the conference room at the operations center, listless counters pass the time, waiting for someone to give them the green light. Some read the paper. Some swivel in their chairs. But all of them are subjected to a particularly cruel form of torture—eight straight hours of

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MSNBC on a wall-length television screen with no remote control. Inside the video room, passed out cameramen saw logs on the floor, while their alert colleagues eye the counters as if they were apes at a zoo exhibit. "She's the only hot one, I'd like to switch to her party affiliation," one camera operator says of a Democratic counter. "The rest look like government employees."

1:45 P.M. A few miles away on Belvedere Road, I visit the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. And they are a brotherhood too—what the mafia used to call a "brotherhood of silence." As I enter the parking lot of a dilapidated building shared with a bail bondsman, there is enough union-worker traffic in the parking lot to make one think it is a shopping mall. Before I can enter the building, however, I'm intercepted by spokeswoman Lane Windham, just in from D.C. along with scores of out-of-town AFL-CIO volunteers and lawyers. All across the city, Democratic types have started up affidavit sweatshops, where "disenfranchised" voters, convinced they were rooked in the election, can swear out complaints. The trade unionists say they are not planning to file suit, they're just "collecting stories." When I ask Windham if I can collect some of the stories, she tells me to be on my way—but not before insisting I talk to the head of the Florida AFL-CIO, Marilyn Lenard, on her cell phone. Lenard tells me that the AFL-CIO is not working in cahoots with the Democrats. But when I pop my head into a lunch room, out of Windham's vigilant gaze, I see a big phone number magic-markered on the wall—the number for the Florida Democratic party. It seems the electrical workers aren't the only ones telling stories.

AP, Wide World Photos

3:45 P.M. At the Lake Ida strip mall in Delray Beach there is a similar affidavit factory, catering to elderly Jewish voters. Here at the Palm Beach Democratic party headquarters, the volunteer hacks and lawyers are a lot more open to letting me collect stories about their collecting stories. At an outdoor folding table, I meet Margot from Boca, a Gore supporter who thinks she confused the punch holes and inadvertently voted for Pat Buchanan. A lawyer asks her if she's sure. She isn't. He asks her if she asked for assistance. She didn't, she says, because the poll worker misplaced her driver's license as she signed in, so "how in the hell was he going to assist me." The lawyer tells her to write down in her complaint (over 10,000 of which have been drafted) that she had "no confidence in the process." Margot obliges, but she does so with trepidation. She is embarrassed over making the goof. "I'm a reading teacher," she confides. "I have degrees up the rear end." But it wasn't her fault, she says. Not only was the ballot confusing, but she wears bifocals. Plus, she was "dead tired" and in a "hurried state" and at a "real low at 4:30 P.M." Somehow, she has summoned the courage to fight. The fear is gone. The document is notarized. The sausage has been made.

THURSDAY. This is a long day at the operations center, as we endure all manner of protest and press conference. Working the parking lot is Bush flack Tucker Eskew (second cousin of Gore strategist Carter Eskew—"we don't keep up," he says) and Republican congressman Mark Foley. Foley has been spinning so long under the hot sun that by midday he has a George Hamilton. As a *Miami Herald* reporter and I conclude lunch at a nearby sub shop, my colleague is alerted on his cell phone by an editor that mass civil disobedience is breaking out. By this time, he's fairly jaded. "Rallies are so last week," he says.

Back at the compound, straw-hatted Republicans brave pro-pot activists and karate-pose-striking Gore supporters while taking to the streets to defend secretary of state Katherine Harris, on track to become the next Linda Tripp. Inside, the counters have finally been given the go-ahead to resume their recounting, though it's not clear if their recounting will count. In the media overflow room, where we watch catatonic bipartisan counters stare at little holes (newsroom wags now call them "f—ing chads"), fierce journalistic debate breaks out. Half the room thinks the first ballot was touched at 7:14 P.M., while the other half thinks it was 7:15 P.M. Blood is nearly spilled as two reporters quibble over whether Theresa LePore welcomed the recounters back with an "okay" or a "good evening" before saying, "here we go again." The authorities are nearly called when a chad debate spins out of control: Is the plural "chads," or is chad its own plural, like "sheep"?

As in the sunshine state itself, it is brother against brother, copy slinger against newsbunny. For now, only one thing is certain: Composing history's first draft isn't pretty. ♦

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An American in Paris

My insane French book tour.

By David Brooks

Paris

Before I tell you about my French book tour, I want you to know that I did not agree to pose naked in a plexiglass bathtub full of milk. When the editor of the French magazine *Jalouse* proposed this, my publisher and I shook our heads and vetoed the idea. It's not only that I minded taking part in an act of shameless plagiarism (maybe you've seen Annie Liebovitz's photo of Whoopie Goldberg in the tub). It's also that I wanted to establish the principle that even after six months of book flogging, there are still some depths to which I won't sink. My resolve to keep my private parts lactose-free is intact.

I did sit passively while my clothes were ripped off on national television, however. I was doing a French evening talk show—one of those five-intellectuals-around-a-table affairs. It was hosted by a young woman known around France for her beautiful eyes and her cleavage, both of which are indeed formidable. And as happened continually during my trip, I was the only one present in a suit and tie (I don't know how Yves St. Laurent stays in business). The writer on my right—one of the nation's foremost interpreters of Bob Dylan and the Beatles—decided I was too well dressed. While I was talking, he went under the table and took off one of my shoes and put it on the table. Then he got up and took off my tie and started unbuttoning my shirt. The intellectual further to my right, a musician who quotes Plato and sells bubblegum rock by telling everybody that it's punk, got out of his chair and came up behind me to help with the disrobing.

David Brooks is a senior editor at The Weekly Standard.

I could have fought back, but I confess that I didn't quite know what to do. Most of my recent television punditry has been on American political shows, and never once on the set of PBS or CNN have I been sexually harassed. But French television has different rules; it's like going from the *NewsHour* to a Marx Brothers movie. So while they were tugging at my chemise, I just kept babbling like an idiot. I should have known beforehand that something odd was liable to happen, since the music writer had opened his fly and showed me his cool underwear in the make-up room. But on the set I just didn't react. If I'd let him take it all off, I could've been the next Jerry Lewis-style French demigod. Instead, I'm just another American in Paris, unprepared for the rigors of French discourse.

A friend told me about an online encyclopedia of neologisms with an entry beginning, "Bobo: a word invented by journalists in London..."

In May, I published a book called *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There*. The book is distinctively American; it describes stories and personalities that are known only here—or so I thought. But there was a surprising foreign response. Like *Baywatch* stud David Hasselhoff, the book became more famous abroad than at home. In Britain, there were a few stories that credited me with the term Bobo (which stands for bourgeois bohemian), including a nice cover story in the *New Statesman*, "Tony Blair is a Bobo." But you may not be surprised to learn that many other British journalists wrote long essays on the concept without burdening their readers with the knowledge that it had been previously described by anyone other than themselves. A friend told me about an online encyclopedia of neologisms that contained an entry beginning: "Bobo: a word invented by journalists in London to describe . . . "

The most surprising responses came from people in Korea (where the book will appear soon), Japan, Argentina, Brazil, and elsewhere, who insisted that Boboism is

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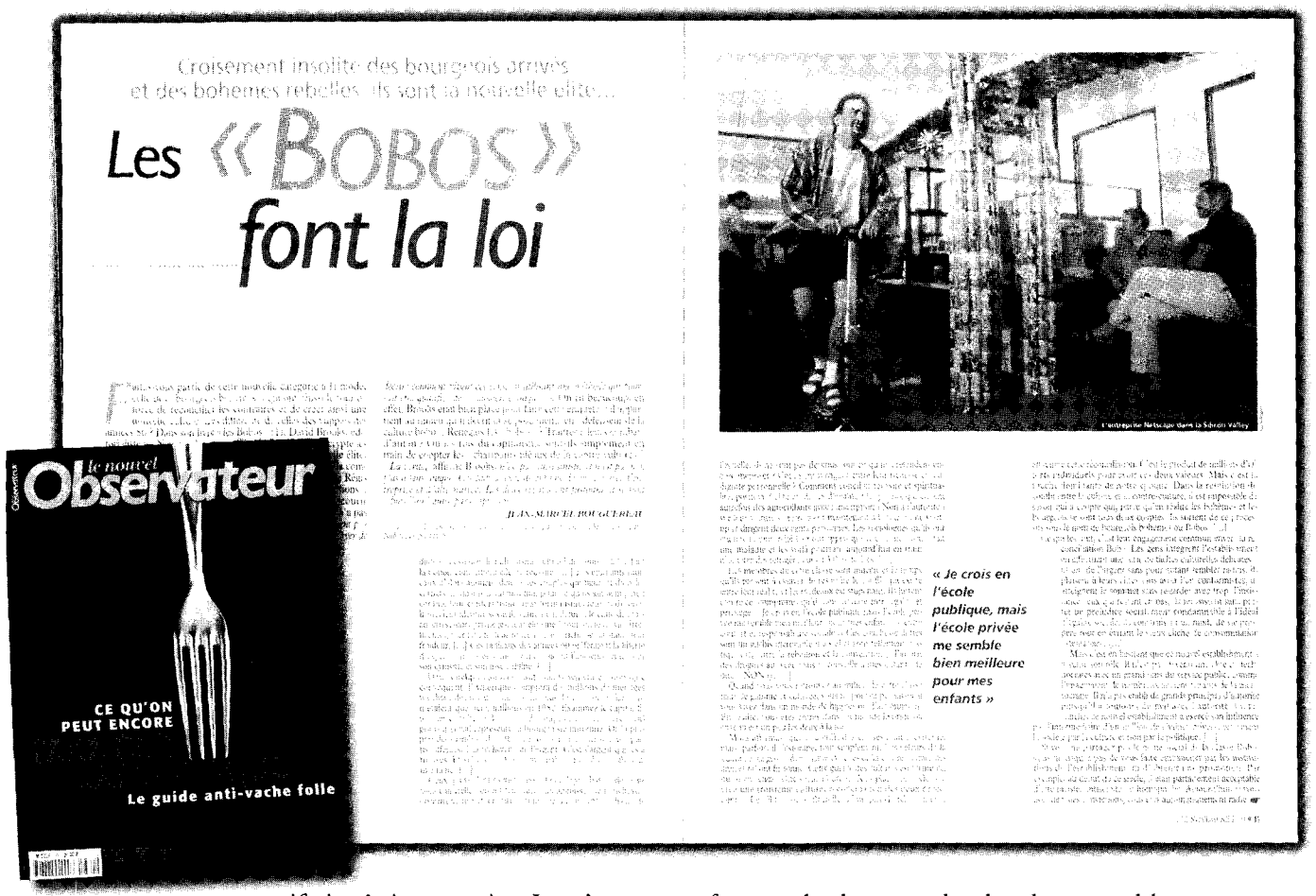

rife in their countries. I can't even imagine a Restoration Hardware store in Korea.

But the most enthusiastic responses have come from France and Germany. Every large French weekly has run a spread on the book, and it's been the subject of culture programs on most of the major radio and TV networks. On November 17, for example, *Le Monde* ran an essay insisting that the word Bobo was actually coined by a Frenchman, the historian Pierre Hassner, to mean Bolshevik-Bonapartistes.

Indeed, my book tour has already been profoundly educational in one key respect. Before, I thought that the French had a weakness for facile ideas with too-clever-by-half monikers. But on this trip, I realized that the French are intellectually rigorous, and pay attention only to ideas that are cosmically profound, yet meticulously documented. I think I came to this realization while I was being interviewed by a beautiful journalist from a weekly magazine who asked me about 30 minutes worth of questions about how Bobos masturbate.

We were having lunch at Bubbles, a champagne restaurant designed like an early 1960s airport lounge—*The Jetsons* come to the *rive droite*. When she began this line of inquiry, I was going to confess that in all my researches I had not really collected data on this area. But fortunately she went ahead and answered her own question. "They only give pleasure to themselves, right? Even when they are having sex with others, they only care about their own pleasure, right?" She seemed to know what she was talking about, so I could only assent. Then when the conversation turned to how modern feminism has made masturbation a liberating power exercise, she began to grow more and more passionate. In other words, I was sitting in a chi-chi restaurant drinking excellent champagne, nibbling grilled salmon, and listening to a beautiful young woman in a low-cut peasant blouse talk about masturbation. I believe this is why Ernest Hemingway came to Paris in the first place.

In America, money and status were the themes of many interviews on my book tour, but in France, sex and philosophy dominated. Indeed, it was stunning how quickly my interlocutors could jump from the pubic to the metaphysical and back again. France is just incredibly sex-drenched. The network Canal Plus did an hour long discussion of the book (without me, fortunately), which was preceded by a promo for an upcoming show about two men who do dances by stretching their foreskins into an incredible variety of shapes. One French monthly I visited was sending out a promotional poster bragging about a 16 percent increase in circulation; for visual interest, the

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poster showed a man with his face buried in a woman's private parts (this was not a pornographic magazine, by the way). On my second day I was being interviewed by a charming, vivacious woman from the French *Cosmopolitan*, and I mentioned that the new elite is based on education, not bloodlines, and that therefore this group has a tendency to turn everything into a form of school. Toys become educational toys. Vacations become edifying alumni tours, and so on. She perked up, noting that in France women now take courses to perfect their technique in the particular sex act that is of the Lewinskyan persuasion. We were having this conversation in English, and while you might think that a reporter from *Cosmopolitan* would have a relatively rich vocabulary to describe this act, even in her second language, this woman knew only one phrase, and it was just about the crudest one in the whole repertoire, a term you never hear in mixed company. She used it over and over again, with an air of easy refinement. I just sat there while she went on and on, people all around us in my publisher's office, waiting for the gendarmes to sweep in and arrest us for violating public decency.

America is supposed to be a raucous country, but everything about the book tour was more anarchic in France. The publisher wanted a better photo of me than the passport-style shot that's on the book. So they hired a photographer who had apparently been inspired by that pulsating photographer in the 1960s movie *Blowup*. Instead of sticking me in a nice spot and shooting a few frames, he had me sprinting with him through the packed streets of Paris while he looked for the right momentary combination of light, color, setting, and background crowd. He would dash across a boulevard, turn with his lens, and tell me to stride across the traffic: "Go! . . . Turn! . . . Lift your head to the light! . . . Stop!" Meanwhile, his assistant would scramble along beside me holding a huge reflecting foil to illuminate my face without creating reflections off my glasses. He quoted some Susan Sontag theory about how photography is like hunting and explained that amidst the chaos of the chase there comes a spontaneous moment in which the real subject reveals himself. Meanwhile, hundreds of Parisians were stopping to check if I was someone famous before turning away.

Another magazine decided I didn't look hip enough to grace its pages, so they brought along a bag of designer clothes, all cut to fit a scrawny French male model. I stood there in the heat of the kitchen of a fashionable French restaurant, unable to breathe in a black on black outfit half my size, while a photographer waved his digital camera around my face. A Parisian TV show had me walk through a few boutiques describing the Bobo style while a spike-haired camerawoman waved her camera at my feet, the back of my head, my hands, anything but my face, in her best cinéma-vérité-on-ecstasy manner.

One night my publishers and I went to dinner at the home of Jean-François Bizot, who wrote a preface for the French edition of the book. I had been told that Bizot, a familiar figure in France, had been the editor of a leading 1960s countercultural magazine, *Actuel*, and is known as the godfather of the underground. He's also extremely rich, the black sheep of the family that owns Rhône-Poulenc. He himself owns a fat avant-garde magazine named *Nova*, two alternative radio stations (which introduced rap and world music to France), and a television production company.

But nothing quite prepared me for his house. It's in the media-dense suburb of Joinville. You walk through a large gate and see an immense 19th-century palace of classical design. But when you enter the hall, you don't know what to think. The tiles under foot are in such disrepair they shift when you step on them. Scattered about are gothic and even romanesque statues of the Virgin and the saints. On every conceivable surface there are hundreds of 30-year-old alternative magazines, from Berkeley, Greenwich Village, and Paris. There are cover stories everywhere advertising interviews with Abbie Hoffman, Lenny Bruce, Jerry Rubin, and the Black Panthers. There are illustrations by the omnipresent countercultural cartoonist, R. Crumb. There are posters for the Newport Jazz Festival. There are leaflets about Vietnam and books about North Korea. There are little ironic toy figurines here and there, yellowing polemical books, a knife that looks like it was once used to slice a baguette a few decades ago, a gun that was buried in the garden just prior to the German invasion in 1870, and all manner of extremely dated furniture from the late sixties. It's as if somebody'd held an all-night revolutionary meeting in 1972, and nobody had ever bothered to clean up.

In fact, Bizot bought this house and turned it into a crash pad for counterculturalists. He'd invite hippies to stay there, and some of them just never left. There are now 20 people living in the mansion, some of them grizzled radicals along with their new wives and kids. Bizot is 55, and some of his housemates are senior figures in the French media (I met the top news editor at a French TV network and a leading journalist at *Nova*), but they've kept the faith. And Bizot himself is, as he would say, a trip. Amidst all the deadly earnest crap about revolution, we forget that there actually was a refreshing fun element to

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the counterculture, and Bizot embodies that. He doesn't say he's a radical or a revolutionary; he says he's a "freak," even while lamenting that the word has lost its once-rich connotations. He delights in everything, he laughs at everything. He's got one of those full-body laughs that has his torso shaking and his face clenched up in Falstaffian joy.

Early in our conversation, amidst the obligatory 30 minutes spent lampooning the American election, I mentioned that I had voted for George W. Bush. This struck Bizot and his housemates as amazing, bizarre, and utterly original. "*C'est fou! C'est fou!*" That's crazy! It's crazy! It was like watching a bunch of lifelong hunters suddenly come face to face with a unicorn. They were too enchanted to shoot. My Bush vote became the theme of our evening. About a third of the way through, after the third or fourth bottle of Beaujolais, Bizot got out his video camera and propped it on the dinner table directly in front of me so he could record my every gesture and utterance for all posterity. It sat there staring at me all night (I learned later the tape made it to his website as streaming video). We talked about some of the now largely forgotten heroes of the counterculture: Murray Bookchin, Paul Goodman (Bizot had a great photo of the longtime *Commentary* contributor cooking vegetables over an open fire at a youth gathering of some kind), and Guy Debord, founder of situationalism. One of the more senior members of our group kept trying to explicate some theory of Trotsky's, but Bizot always interrupted him with jokes, and the guy finally moved over to the other side of the table where he could ratiocinate. Every few minutes we'd come back to Bush, to my amazing vote, and in particular to Bizot's theory that some of President Bush's old CIA buddies had botched their effort to fix the election.

My vote for Bush struck Bizot and his housemates as amazing, bizarre, and utterly original. "C'est fou! C'est fou!" they cried.

I left the house in the wee hours, as blissfully confused about Guy Debord as I had been when I'd arrived, but a little better informed about the sixties. "I'll tell you what 1968 was all about in France," Bizot said past midnight. "It took me a while to realize this. We were tired of being last. Even in Denmark they were ahead of us. We weren't allowed to take girls to our rooms in the university." A writer from Lebanon once told me that his country blew up when young fundamentalist men started seeing women in bikinis on the beaches. Both theories are oddly compelling.

Bizot admitted that he's something of a relic of a bygone era. But there is also a clever and even, if you'll pardon the expression, postmodern aspect to the way he's constructed his life and his image. For example, the furniture. It looks like it's been sitting there since the days of the student strikes. In fact, Bizot bought much of it recently over eBay and had it shipped from the States.

The next day, while I was sitting with a young woman from the French version of *Amazon.com*, I learned that there are now brigades of anti-Bizots. There is a movement in French journalism made up of young people who hate the 1960s. They have a magazine called *Technikart*, which is full of attacks on self-absorbed sixty-eighters who can't get over their supposedly glorious youths and who denigrate all the subsequent generations for their supposed apathy. In this magazine there are interviews with psychologists who dissect the pathetic inability of the sixties radicals to accept adulthood. There are open letters to the baby boomers telling them how pathetic they are. In the current issue there's a piece savaging Bizot as a hidebound reactionary. *Technikart* is operated largely by scions of France's most prominent families, and one day a couple of them came to talk to me (also carrying a videocam for their web page). With a smidgen of prompting, they went off on the sort of savage attack on the 1960s that would set Hilton Kramer's heart aglow. But then I asked them who their political hero was, and the young man said simply, "Marcos." I looked blankly at him, trying to figure out if he meant Imelda.

"Comandante Marcos," he continued. "The revolutionary. . . . The ones that wore the masks."

And then it dawned on me that he was talking about the leader of the rebels in Chiapas, Mexico, the one who staged the fledgling armed revolt a few years ago. They were attacking the New Left from the left.

"Mitterrand's wife went and met with him. She is on the left hand," he said proudly.

I sat there amazed. In other words, in order to rebel against radical chic baby boomers who romanticized Che Guevara, the new French youth movement is embracing radical chic Danielle Mitterrand, who romanticized Comandante Marcos! This is the daring new movement.

But amazement was pretty much standard fare in Paris. The French are supposed to take ideas so much more seriously than we do, but what I saw was spectacle. It's like a country that has managed to keep itself dynamic by means of constant titillation—and of course a deep appreciation of the finest literary masterworks that come from overseas. ♦

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Gore's Closing Surge

What it was, and what it wasn't

By Jeffrey Bell & Frank Cannon

The bizarre, heart-stopping aftermath of the 2000 presidential election, historic as it is, would never have occurred if the election had been held just one week earlier. National pollsters are nearly unanimous in believing that a George W. Bush lead of perhaps 5 percentage points at the end of October turned into the dead heat in the popular vote that was cast on November 7.

By Election Day, most national polls were reporting a swing toward Al Gore. At least two widely followed national polls (CBS and Rasmussen) announced big shifts to Gore in press statements issued on Election Day itself. But the first pollster to detect a significant swing to Gore was John Zogby, who conducted national and state tracking polls for Reuters. Zogby's national tracking found a Bush lead of around 4 points early in the week before the election turning into a Gore lead of 2 points, based on polling conducted through Monday night, November 6.

Zogby, who maintained his thesis of a Gore trend in the face of skepticism from Republican officials and (at first) his fellow pollsters, dismisses the theory that the trend was triggered by the revelation on Thursday, November 2, of Gov. Bush's 1976 arrest for drunk driving. Though Zogby doesn't rule out the possibility that the revelation contributed to Bush's late problems, his interviewers began picking up the Gore trend several days before the DUI story surfaced.

If not the DUI "November surprise," what did begin the Gore surge? Some analysts believe that, given the favorable economic and social trends in the country, Bush's lead was always destined to shrink or disappear. But that raises the question of why the pattern of the past few months was not a gradual shrinking of a big Bush lead as the election neared—the pattern of the Nixon-Humphrey race of 1968—but a seesaw, featuring large (and largely unpredicted) swings to Bush in the spring, to Gore in the summer, and back to Bush in the fall.

It is, in retrospect, widely and correctly believed that Gore helped himself at the time of the national conventions and that Bush benefited from the presidential debates. It is also widely believed that the public's conflicted view of the Clinton presidency was a key subtext of the entire election cycle (see "The Politics of Bifurcation," by Jeffrey Bell in The Weekly Standard of March 13, 2000). Certainly Bush's biggest applause line throughout the campaign was about restoring integrity to the White House, and Gore's best period in national polling came after he distanced himself from Clinton in his convention acceptance speech and chose the most prominent Democratic critic of Clinton as his running mate.

But did Gore's late surge, coming at a time when Clinton was doing his first high-profile campaigning since the convention, mean that voters were beginning to discard their divided view of Clinton? If the election had lasted another week, would Gore have won going away, fully vindicating the Clinton legacy?

Political scientists may debate this question for decades. But a cursory look at the huge exit poll conducted for the news media by Voter News Service (VNS) suggests some interesting and rather surprising answers.

First, on Election Day, approval or disapproval of Bill Clinton remained an uncanny predictor of a vote for Gore or Bush. Gore got just 6 percent of anti-Clinton voters, while Bush managed 12 percent of pro-Clinton voters. It was Bush's ability to retain a decent share (37 percent to Gore's 59) of the 18 percent of voters who approve of Clinton's job performance but disapprove of him personally—the "Clinton bifurcation" voters—that allowed him to split the national vote in the eighth year of an administration that has presided over some very favor-

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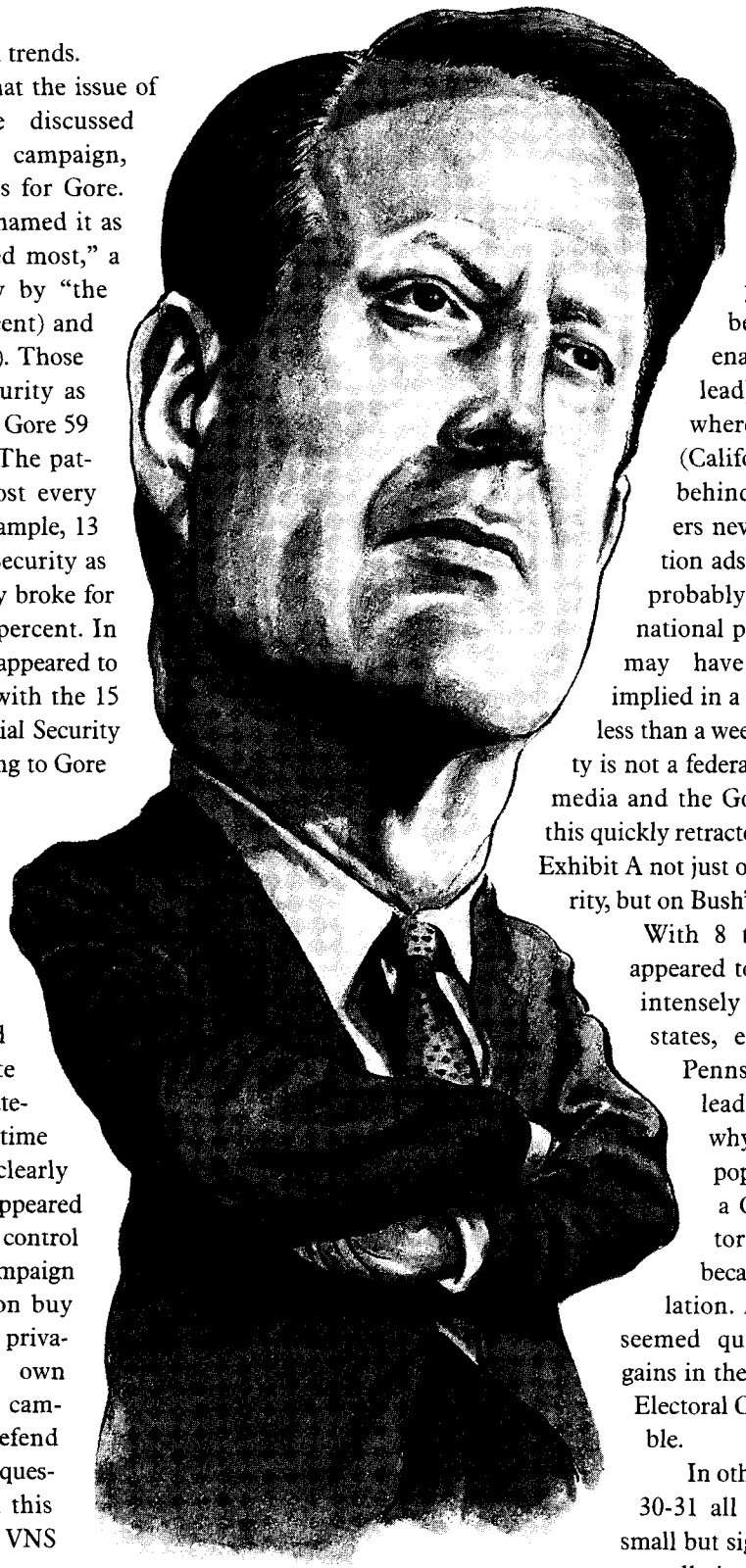
able economic and social trends.

Second, it is clear that the issue of Social Security, little discussed through most of the campaign, proved to be a big plus for Gore. Nationally, 14 percent named it as the issue that "mattered most," a number exceeded only by "the economy/jobs" (18 percent) and "education" (15 percent). Those who named Social Security as their top issue voted for Gore 59 percent to 39 percent. The pattern is similar in almost every state. In Florida, for example, 13 percent named Social Security as their top issue, and they broke for Gore 58 percent to 40 percent. In Pennsylvania, the issue appeared to help Gore even more, with the 15 percent who named Social Security as their top issue breaking to Gore 65 percent to 33 percent.

Gore criticized Bush's plan for partial privatization of Social Security all along, but began to make it a central focus only in the third and final presidential debate on October 17. Immediately after the debate, at a time when Bush had clearly regained the lead and appeared to have a chance to take control of the race, the Gore campaign began a heavy television buy attacking Bush's partial privatization plan. In its own advertising, the Bush campaign decided not to defend his plan directly, but to question Gore's veracity on this and other subjects. The VNS poll suggests this response ultimately failed to satisfy most of the 14 million voters who put Social Security at the top of their list. Given the lateness of Social Security's prominence in the campaign, it seems plausible that it generated a portion of the Gore comeback.



Illustrations by Drew Friedman

But Gore's advertising on Social Security was most intense in such target states as Florida, Pennsylvania, and Michigan (where independent pollster Ed Sarpolus stated in late October that the ads had enabled Gore to take the lead). Because in big states where Gore was solidly ahead (California, New York) or behind (Ohio, Texas) most voters never saw the anti-privatization ads, the Social Security issue probably didn't much move the national polls, at least at first. This may have changed when Bush implied in a Missouri appearance with less than a week to go that Social Security is not a federal program. National news media and the Gore campaign jumped on this quickly retracted sound bite, and made it Exhibit A not just on the issue of Social Security, but on Bush's overall readiness to lead.

With 8 to 10 days to go, Bush appeared to be losing ground in the intensely contested battleground states, especially Michigan and Pennsylvania, yet his national lead seemed intact. This is why a victory by Bush in the popular vote combined with a Gore victory in the Electoral College suddenly became a major topic of speculation. A Bush popular win still seemed quite likely, while Gore's gains in the big swing states made an Electoral College win for him plausible.

In other words, around October 30-31 all national polls showed a small but significant Bush lead, while most polls in battleground states were close or showed an outright Gore lead. If you had told most Electoral College analysts that a Bush national lead of 5 percentage points would turn into a Gore national lead, however small, by Election Day, they (we) would have concluded that Gore was headed for a rather solid

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victory in the Electoral College. This is why Zogby's early spotting of Gore's national surge was attacked so fiercely by Republican activists and pollsters. If Zogby was right and the popular vote was moving to a nationwide dead heat, Bush's already shaky chances in the Electoral College would be nil.

Instead, a scenario no one had anticipated came to pass on Election Night: a slim Gore victory in the popular vote, together with a razor-thin (and still disputed) Bush victory in the Electoral College.

A comparison of nearly complete state-by-state returns with state polls taken late in the campaign gives a clear picture of what happened. Gore surged, but his gains were far from uniform.

Some states, including California and New York, saw a shift to Gore greater than the national average. (This may account for the loss of four Republican-held House seats in California and the unexpectedly large victory margin of senator-elect Hillary Rodham Clinton in New York.) A second group of states, including Ohio, saw a shift that mirrored the national average. And a third group of states, including socially conservative states in the South and heartland, shared little if any of the pro-Gore trend and in some cases actually flowed toward Bush.

One of the things that gave Gore a shot at winning Florida was his widely excoriated decision to oppose the return of Elián to Cuba.

A few examples give the flavor. To minimize anomalies and flawed samples, we have tried to confine ourselves to states in which more than one late poll was published.

¶ In California, polls by Zogby and Field with interviews concluding Sunday, November 5, when averaged, show Gore leading Bush 46.5 percent to 42.5 percent. On Election Day, Gore won 54 percent to 42 percent, a 12-point margin and an 8-point Gore gain.

¶ In Ohio, a Zogby poll ending November 5 and a *Columbus Dispatch* poll ending November 3 show Bush leading Gore 52 percent to 42.5 percent. On Election Day, this 9.5-point margin shrank to 4 points, 50 percent to 46 percent. The 5.5-point swing to Gore was similar to the national shift, but not enough to put in play a state where the Gore campaign had pulled the plug on its television commercials several weeks earlier.

¶ In Arkansas, the home state of President Clinton, which became a major target for both campaigns, three published polls with final interviews on October 29, October 30, and November 1 were taken by, respectively, Mason-Dixon, Opinion Research, and the Memphis *Commercial Appeal*. All three were in close agreement. When averaged, they found Bush leading 46 percent to 45 percent. On Election Day, Arkansas broke to Bush 51 percent to 45 percent.

¶ Many if not most of the states that voted for Bush showed similar resistance to the late Gore trend. A rare exception is New Hampshire, the only Northeastern state and the most socially liberal state Bush managed to carry. The final American Research Group poll, taken November 2 and 3, showed Bush leading Gore 48 percent to 38 percent. On Election Day, Bush won 48 percent to 47 percent, a 9-point swing to Gore that was considerably larger than his national gain.

Last and perhaps most pertinent is the case of Florida, the most diverse and least southern of the southern states, whose virtually even vote will decide this virtually even presidential election.

Time's postelection edition, drawing on in-depth interviews with strategists for both presidential campaigns, makes clear that Florida, long assumed to be a solid Bush state, became a special project of the Gore campaign as early as June. President Clinton had won Florida 48 percent to 42 percent in 1996, and he urged a big Gore effort there. Ironically, one of the things that gave Gore a shot at winning Florida was one of his most visible disagreements with a Clinton policy: his widely excoriated decision to distance himself from the forcible return of Elián Gonzáles to Cuba.

According to *Time*, then-campaign chairman Tony Coelho last summer found Cuban-American leaders more open to Gore than he expected. In addition, Gore field marshals Robert Shrum and Tad Devine were handling the successful U.S. Senate race of Democrat Bill Nelson, and polling done for that campaign found a huge generic Democratic advantage on preserving Social Security and Medicare. Later, a TV commercial accusing Bush of promising the same Social Security money "to young workers and seniors" boosted Gore's positive rating by 10 points among Florida seniors, according to unnamed Gore aides speaking to *Time*.

What the aides do not say is that according to VNS, Bush won Florida voters 60 years old and above by 51 percent to 47 percent. Does this mean that the Social Security issue didn't hurt Bush in Florida? Hardly. As mentioned

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earlier, Gore's lead among voters listing Social Security as their top issue was roughly the same as his big advantage on this issue nationally. Furthermore, it's often forgotten that voter concern about the future of Social Security is by no means restricted to those currently receiving it or about to receive it.

But the unwillingness of so many Florida seniors to break to Gore, despite qualms they undoubtedly had about Social Security privatization, is of a piece with the cultural and social conservatism that kept half of America in the Bush camp. It is also consistent with the 1998 congressional elections, which saw slight overall GOP declines among most age groups, unexpectedly offset by a GOP surge among seniors.

In Florida, as in Pennsylvania, Michigan, and the other states that bore the brunt of Gore's mid-October TV ad offensive against Bush's Social Security position, the Bush campaign had suffered much if not most of the damage on this issue by the time of Zogby's final poll. That poll, taken November 3 to 5, showed Gore leading Bush in Florida 49 percent to 46 percent. The final result—49 percent to 49 percent, a 3-point swing to Bush—puts Florida among the states that bucked the late Gore trend in the nation as a whole. (According to VNS, Florida voters who decided in the last three days chose Bush 47 percent to 41 percent.) If Florida had not been among these states, the White House transition from Clinton to Gore would be well under way.

It should be added that the resistance of culturally conservative parts of the nation to the Gore candidacy is apparent from the closeness of the vote in many economically liberal states that ultimately chose Gore. These include such Democratic-leaning states as Iowa and Wisconsin, which haven't voted Republican since 1984 but came within an eyelash of voting for Bush, and Minnesota, which hasn't voted Republican since 1972.

The fact that Bush lost his lead in the popular vote should not obscure the surprising strength of his candidacy in a time of peace abroad and low unemployment plus record declines in welfare and violent crime at home. As *Los Angeles Times* reporter Ron Brownstein put it, this has turned out to be an election in which gun ownership was a better predictor of voter choice than stock ownership.

From the launching of his candidacy in mid-1999 to Election Day, Bush understood that a campaign built around an ambitious domestic agenda would go against the grain, at a time when the nation was enjoying a justified sense of economic momentum. But he also saw that the resistance of the American people to the impeachment of Bill Clinton, far from signaling a lack of moral concern, created an opening for a broader discussion of the role of religion and values in culture and even government, a discussion few others believed possible.

The Bush campaign's pursuit of this vision set the terms of debate and put Al Gore on the defensive, forcing him to depart from Clinton's successful centrist strategy and rely on the kind of economic polarization that worked for FDR and Harry Truman but was getting stale as long ago as the 1960s. In our opinion, Bill Clinton's flaws left Gore little choice, and his campaign proved tactically proficient in executing its strategy. But Bush's fundamental insight was sound—that in 2000, the issue of values, of the acceptance or rejection of Clinton and Clintonism, would prove to be the vital center of American politics. ♦

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ADVERTISEMENT

"And the Winner Is..."

"My boy," General Ulysses S. Grant began, "we've got one thing in common. I told you once I was asked where did I stand in my class at West Point? I replied that if anyone turned the list of the class upside down, they'd find my name near the top. I hear it's the same line you use yourself."

"Yes, Sir. I never asked your permission."

"I feel a little sorry for us both."

"Mr. President," I continued, "what about the close race between Bush and Gore?"

"If what I say sounds dumb, few will be surprised. If it makes sense it will surprise a great many."

"Yes, Sir. I understand."

"Well, it comes down to the wire. A few votes decide. Do you know what I think?"

"I'd like to know, General."

"America is the real winner. Why? Because we are the richest, most powerful nation on earth. Only a few votes decide the fate and future for some two hundred and fifty million people. Think of it. Maybe the votes of a few new immigrants to America decide. Talk about the power of the people. Where else but here?"

"Amazing, Mr. President. Anything more?"

"The decision could rest in the hands of a few, rich or poor, smart or dumb. No riots, no blood in the streets, only a few token police at any polling place, a lot of talk. That's it."

"We don't hear enough of this, General."

"Perhaps because you and I are not too bright."

"Not you, Sir. Me, Sir."

"Then, there's this. America goes to war. She wins. Germany and Japan lose. We make them winners once again. What other nation in the history of the world has ever done the likes of that? What other people in any other country in the world is so willing to gamble its destiny left in the hands of a few hundred or a few thousand?"

"It's really something, Sir," I agreed.

"And around the world so many call him Uncle Sap."

"I know. I've heard."

"I think it's that we're simply not afraid," the General went on. "I wasn't when I met with General Lee at Appomatix Court House nor was Mr. Lincoln. You see, it's as if one and the same vein runs through every American. Inside it, courses the same color blood in each of us. Only the skin is red, white, black, or yellow. Up there, He cares about America. He even takes us by the hand to see ourselves in a looking glass. But the reflection we see is another American, like ourselves, man or woman. As did Alice in Wonderland, we step through the mirror. We grasp the hand or hold the arm of someone else. I say, 'Hi.' He or she says, 'Hi.' We walk off old friends and fellow citizens. We leave behind yet another crisis as threatening as the Civil War, Cuban Missiles, or Pearl Harbor."

"True, Sir."

"You bet it is, my boy. There will always be those who call him Uncle Sap. Those who do will never do it to our face. Uncle Sap there is not. Uncle Sam, there is. They know it. They better had."

"Thank you, General," said I.

"Don't thank me. Thank God," the great man commanded me, but he didn't need to.

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This Almost-Chosen People

Abraham Lincoln's America

By Glenn Tinder

One of the constant characteristics of great historical figures is their inscrutability. Their lives are apt to be pervaded by ambiguities and contradictions, their greatness strangely undefinable.

Abraham Lincoln is a good example. He has often seemed, in comparison with other men of power and high station, a quintessential "common man"—though plainly he possessed quite uncommon strength and integrity of character. As chief executive he was calculating and inexorable (in his acceptance of the enormous casualties incurred in Grant's invasion of the South, for example) to a degree justifying the epithet "Machiavellian"—though at the same time he often appeared, both to those close to him and to those looking on from a distance, to be a man of simple and exceptional goodness.

So too Lincoln is, in some sense, the most spiritual of America's political leaders. He corresponds strikingly with the "suffering servant" image in the Book of Isaiah: "without form or comeliness," "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Considering the terrible national trespass of slavery that shaped his presidency, we can readily think of him as "wounded for our transgressions" and "bruised for our iniquities." It is virtually unavoidable to think of him as a Christ figure. Yet he was not a Christian in any conventional sense; indeed, he may not even have been a believer in any conventional sense.

A New Birth of Freedom
Abraham Lincoln and the Coming of the Civil War
by Harry V. Jaffa
Rowman & Littlefield, 750 pp., $35

On Hallowed Ground
Abraham Lincoln and the Foundations of American History
by John Patrick Diggins
Yale University Press, 352 pp., $27.95

The mystery of Lincoln is deepened when one considers his historical significance. The most conspicuous characteristic of Lincoln's time in office is the tragedy of it, with over 600,000 deaths among men under arms, and Lincoln's tenure in the White House pervaded by anguish and ending in violent death.

Yet a guiding intuition of Lincoln's life was that of his being governed by a mysterious providential power. And the meaning American history can be seen as clearly through the window of Lincoln's presidency as in any other way. In construing for Americans the significance of the Civil War, Lincoln went back to a time earlier than the writing of the Constitution, back to the Declaration of Independence and its affirmation of human equality, and he saw the Declaration as defining a cause entitled to the allegiance of Americans throughout their historical future.

It is even possible to see in Lincoln's tragic life and times a key to the meaning of not only American, but all human, history: the working out of the political and social implications of the idea of the sanctity of every person. Harry V. Jaffa argues that the Lincoln presidency, building on the Declaration, brought an epochal shift in the order of human life—from hierarchies based on prescription and birth to government based on consent of the governed.

Young Lincoln the Railsplitter. Early twentieth-century hagiography. All Photos: Hulton Getty Collection.

The appearance of Jaffa's *A New Birth of Freedom: Abraham Lincoln and the Coming of the Civil War* is an intellectual event of some significance. Back in 1959, Jaffa published *Crisis of the House Divided: An Interpretation of the Issues in the Lincoln-Douglas Debates*—a work still widely acclaimed as monumental. Allen C. Guelzo, author of a recent award-winning biography of Lincoln, calls it "incon-

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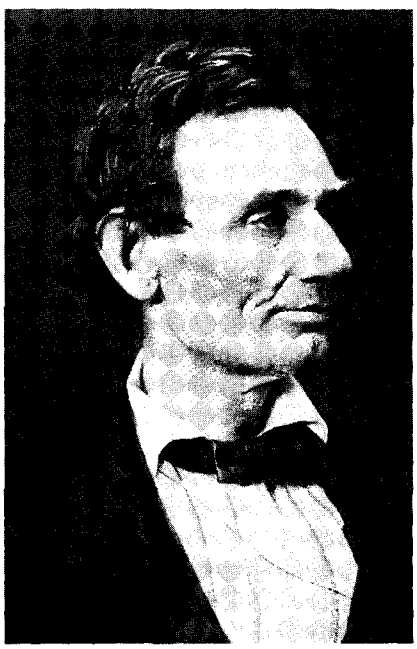
testably the greatest Lincoln book of the century." John Patrick Diggins, author of the new *On Hallowed Ground: Abraham Lincoln and the Foundations of American History*, labels it a "classic pioneering work." These are typical appraisals, and the esteem they express gave rise to widespread anticipation of a promised sequel.

Only now, over forty years later, with the publication of *A New Birth of Freedom*, has the sequel finally appeared. The new volume will not prove a disappointment. It is a product of rigorous reasoning, reflects a profound knowledge of Lincoln and his era, and is cast in vigorous prose. And like the earlier volume, it expresses a deep moral seriousness.

It is not easy, however, to say more specifically why *A New Birth of Freedom* is as good a book as it is. Jaffa devotes little or no attention to certain interesting and even vital aspects of Lincoln's life and thought. Lincoln's concern with the economics of equality—property rights, free labor, and self-improvement—is largely neglected. The idea of equality is consequently more abstract in Jaffa than it was in Lincoln. Further, the strangeness of the linkage of Lincoln and Jefferson is scarcely noted, even though Jaffa stresses the importance to Lincoln (and to the whole American future) of Jefferson's Declaration. Jefferson and Lincoln were anomalous historical partners—patrician landowner and self-educated frontier lawyer; slaveholder and slavery's deadly enemy; romantic agrarian and apostle of small industry and personal advancement; foe of large government and friend of tariffs and internal improvements. Jaffa seems not to have reflected on the ironic destiny that brought two such figures together.

More particularly, it is regrettable that so searching a book as *A New Birth of Freedom* does not search into the grounds of natural law and of its moral authority. Human equality has its source, according to Jaffa, in natural law. But does natural law possess moral authority in the absence of any idea that nature manifests a principle that is virtually divine, as in Plato and Aristotle, or is created by God, as in Judaism and Christianity? Surprisingly, Jaffa never asks. He bases the moral authority of natural law mainly on the proposition that by nature we all are human: none of us animals and none of us gods.

These are dangerously skimpy grounds for the edifice of equality. It is debatable whether champions of equality who are armed solely with a disenchanted concept of nature can grapple successfully with the imposing fact, so central in the political thought of both Plato and Aristotle, that human beings are in fact dramatically unequal. They



are unequal not only in qualities like physical beauty and strength, and practical ability and theoretical intelligence, but even in moral excellence and hence, it might be inferred, in the dignity deriving from man's moral nature. In what way are they equal? There are answers to this question, but whether they can be deduced from the bare idea of natural law is open to doubt.

In spite of these and other gaps, however, most readers will find *A New Birth of Freedom* to be a powerful work. This is mainly, I think, because of a quality to which the gaps may contribute: the intense moral focus of the work. Jaffa strives relentlessly and often eloquently to show that the moral core of Lincoln's life and public statements is the proposition that slavery is wrong. While Lincoln's immediate aim was the preservation of the Union, his ultimate and overriding aim always was the end of slavery, which he thought would inevitably come about if the Union were preserved. The principle of human equality, with its implicit condemnation of slavery, is depicted as a kind of keystone in a philosophical arch defining the American Republic. Making up that arch are stones like government by consent, the rule of law, minority rights, and the right of revolution. Jaffa analyzes this structure exhaustively and compares Lincoln's views with the views of other public figures of his time. The theme repeatedly stated, and continually reinforced by Jaffa's analysis, is that "republican government could not be right unless slavery was wrong." Whether the arch of the republic stood or collapsed depended on that one stone.

Fixing Lincoln's place in the history of America's basic principles enables Jaffa at the same time to fix Lincoln's place in Western history. Vindication of human equality entailed suppression of "the divine right of kings," the belief reigning from the end of the city-state era in ancient times until the American Revolution that political authority comes from above—from God to king, to high-ranking vassals, and finally to ordinary subjects. The downward flow of political obligation was reversed by Jefferson's Declaration and Lincoln's presidency. Thereafter, authority takes its rise from the natural rights belonging equally to every human being. Only through an act of general consent does authority pass rightfully into the hands of those above. This is the source of Lincoln's conviction, definitively expressed in the Gettysburg Address, that the cause of Union was the cause of the entire human race.

Lincoln's signal achievement, then, was his translation of his own moral core into America's moral core—his successful teaching of the nation that its own deepest principles demanded the abolition of slavery. He effected this teaching by employing the proposition

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An 1865 political cartoon attacking Lincoln as author of an amended Constitution

that "all men are created equal" and are endowed with "certain unalienable Rights," to explain the meaning of the Civil War and the historical mission of the nation that was saved by that war.

Seen from this perspective, Lincoln's character takes on large proportions. Jaffa rebuts some of the common slurs on Lincoln and the nation he led. The frequent charge that Lincoln looked on blacks as inferior to whites is unsupported by compelling evidence; his seemingly prejudiced statements are readily explained by political necessity.

And the common supposition that the Constitution is morally compromised by an implicit approval of slavery is false. It was not remarkable, Jaffa observes, that a nation of slaveholders did not, on gaining independence, immediately abolish slavery. "What was remarkable—perhaps more remarkable than any other event in human history—was that a nation of slaveholders declared that all men are created equal and thereby made the abolition of slavery a moral and political necessity."

John Patrick Diggins's *On Hallowed Ground* is more casual, at least in manner, than Jaffa's book, and more like a collection of essays than like an integrated study. Nonetheless, it is serious in content. It manifests both thorough knowledge of American history and philosophical acumen. And it bears significantly on Lincoln even though it is not quite *about* him.

Diggins is driven by an animus against poststructuralism and multiculturalism. These movements, as he sees them, blind us to American history. They absurdly exaggerate the historical significance of minority groups—even though such groups may deserve greater attention than they received from historians of the past. Diggins protests "the mystique of difference" and asserts that "not since the Nazi propaganda has a document like the *National History Standards* so minimized the importance of the Western Enlightenment and replaced political knowledge about human nature with cultural mystiques about races and racial heritages." So too poststructuralism and multiculturalism obscure the traits defining universal humanity by obscuring the concept of natural rights and the consequent imperative of equal liberty.

Diggins is troubled as well by the way postmodern fashions lead to misunderstandings of democracy. They blind us, for example, to the elemental fact that democracy is not in itself a form of power but rather is in conflict with power. "Democracy aims to expand, encompass, absorb, and, above all, include; power seeks to restrict, confine, limit, and above all, exclude." Moreover, those captivated by poststructuralist illusions suppose that democracy is necessarily progressive, failing to notice such phenomena as racial prejudice in labor unions. Hence women and various minority groups are handicapped by the assumption that rectification of the wrongs they suffer from, and advancement of democracy, are one and the same cause.

Worst of all is the loss of moral foundations that poststructuralist principles bring about. If there is no objective reality outside "texts," then there is no objective right or wrong to sustain the political protests that texts often contain. The consequences, Diggins suggests, can be illustrated by the women's movement. "Feminists would like to insist that men do not have a right to be sexist," he writes, "but since poststructuralism informs us that everything is a matter of interpretation and perspective, and that there is no truth but only varying beliefs and practices, does not the sexist have a right to be different and, moreover, exempt from universal standards of right and wrong?" This query could be pertinently addressed to a multitude of politically correct postmodernists.

In relating all this to Lincoln, Diggins, like Jaffa, is in search of moral ground—for Americans in general and historians in particular. One thing Lincoln stands for, of course, is the simple notion that there is such a thing as authentic truth and not merely the beliefs that make up the universe of poststructuralism. He also stands for the idea that there are authentic values beyond the countless preferences that mark out the world of multiculturalism. Emerson once observed that one of the needs of the American soul is a vision of America as a whole. And Lincoln, Diggins believes, meets this need: "In his patriotic nationalism, in his liberal dedication to work and opportunity for all, and in his religious devotion to justice, charity, and magnanimity, American history reached its most sublime synthesis."

Harry Jaffa would, I think, wholly concur with this sentiment. Indeed, the

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two authors, as divergent as they are in manner, are remarkably alike in their principal themes and concerns. Both are offended by postmodernism in its various forms. And both are fundamentally liberal, in the broad sense of that term.

America's significance in the world and in history lies in its embodiment of the principle of liberty for all. Lincoln's significance is that he symbolizes and—better than anyone else—defined America's liberal character.

Lincoln's liberalism is neither on the "left" nor the "right," as we think of these positions today. Diggins notes that Lincoln believed passionately in the rights of workers but also that he perceived no basic conflict between labor and capital. "Lincoln saw," according to Diggins, "as did Tocqueville, what Marx completely missed seeing: that an environment that esteems labor will lead not to socialism but to capitalism."

And while Jaffa shows that such typically "leftist" concepts as equality and the right of revolution were integral to Lincoln's outlook, he clearly does not intend to place Lincoln on the left. Indeed, Diggins and Jaffa both exhibit a figure who was so politically wise that few would ask whether he was politically correct.

Jaffa and Diggins alike are at war with what Jaffa in the final paragraph of his book calls a "shallow and permissive historicism and relativism." This historicism and relativism are what stand behind the effort of some academic writers to diminish Lincoln's stature. And they have moved those writers, as Jaffa notes, to subject the idea of natural rights, and the God who created all men equal, to "scorn and contempt." Both authors are incensed by the intellectual irresponsibility they perceive in such attacks.

Jaffa summons in opposition the power of truth and reason and ends his book with a grand closing line—a line with which Diggins too might have appropriately ended: "We must then take up the weapons of truth and go forth to battle once again for the cause of Father Abraham, of Union, and of Freedom, as in the olden time." ♦

Napoleon's retreat at Waterloo. Hulton Getty Collection.

History As It Wasn't

What if Napoleon had won at Waterloo? What if Cleopatra had had an ugly nose? BY DAVID FRUM

Many years ago, my father-in-law bumped into an old Korean War buddy in a Hong Kong street. The friend, now a general, offered to fly him back to North America on a military plane. Wanting to buy more souvenirs, my father-in-law declined. So they exchanged addresses and promised to get in touch when they returned home. That evening, the general's plane vanished over the Pacific.

Virtual History
Alternatives and Counterfactuals
edited by Niall Ferguson
Basic, 560 pp., $30

What If?
The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been
edited by Robert Cowley
Putnam, 395 pp., $27.95

Who doesn't have a story like this? Who has never wondered about how our lives and the lives of those we love would have been altered had we made another choice than the one we did? *Footfalls echo in the memory*, as T.S. Eliot wrote in "Burnt Norton," *Down the passage which we did not take, / Towards the door we never opened.*

But though it's natural to speculate about the paths we personally did not choose, historians have warned for decades that it is futile and misleading to engage in such speculation about humanity as a whole. "Cleopatra's nose: Had it been shorter, the whole face of the world would have been changed," Blaise Pascal mused—and ever since, the idea that something as contingent as one woman's beauty might be responsible for the rise and fall of kingdoms has been damned by the historical profession as the "fallacy of Cleopatra's nose."

Historians have objected to Pascal's proposition for two opposite reasons: some because they believe that the shortening of Cleopatra's nose would have changed too little to make a difference; others because they believe that it would have changed too much for the human mind to reckon with.

Those who disparage the effect of the nose-change think that historical developments are vast, virtually irresistible tides, channeled within bounds that no individual can alter. Suppose Cleopatra had been less seductive, and that as a result Mark Antony rather than Octavian had emerged the dictator of Rome. How could that make a

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difference? To succeed, Antony would have had to govern more or less as Octavian did; had he failed to do so, his regime would have swiftly collapsed, as the three military dictatorships before Octavian's collapsed. In other words, had Cleopatra's nose been shorter, the names on the busts in the Capitoline museum might well have been altered. But the face of the world? Hardly a jot. According to this deterministic objection, historical counterfactuals are useless because they fail to take account of how little difference any single human being can make.

The other theory, by contrast, complains that Cleopatra's nose counterfactuals are useless because they fail to reckon with how *much* difference a single human being can make. Ray Bradbury has a famous science-fiction story in which a character travels back in time to the age of the dinosaurs, accidentally steps on a single butterfly, and returns to the present—only to discover the world entirely changed. It's ridiculous, goes this theory, to ask how Mark Antony's empire would have differed from Octavian's. Alter one fact of history and all of history is put up for grabs, in such a radical way that we here in North America could easily be pondering in Chinese what-if scenarios about our Han dynasty ancestors.

The Italian historian and philosopher Benedetto Croce delivered an especially eloquent expression of this point of view, which is disapprovingly quoted in Niall Ferguson's introduction to *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals*, a recent collection of essays on the topic. The Cleopatra's nose problem, Croce complained, "arbitrarily divides the course of history into necessary facts and accidental facts." A supposedly accidental fact is then

> mentally eliminated in order to espy how the first would have developed along its own lines if it had not been disturbed by the second. This is a game which all of us in moments of distraction or idleness indulge in, when we muse on the way our life might have turned out if we had not met a certain person, . . . cheerfully treating ourselves, in these meditations, as though we were the necessary and stable element, it simply not occurring to us . . . to provide for the transformation of this self of ours which is, at the moment of thinking, what it is, with all its experiences and regrets and fancies, just because we did meet that person.

And yet despite all these wise admonitions, people continue to engage in just the sort of speculation Croce and others condemn. They use it as a teaching device, to jolt people out of the complacent assumption that events had to happen as they did: The British historian Conrad Russell has a marvelous essay about how, if the wind had not abruptly shifted in 1688, the Glorious Revolution would have failed and a Catholic king would have been preserved on the English throne. At still other times it serves a moral purpose, prodding us to appreciate the importance of individuals in history: What if the car that struck Winston Churchill when he looked the wrong way before crossing Fifth Avenue in 1931 had killed him? Alexis de Tocqueville warned that because men in democratic societies feel themselves to be small and weak, they are dangerously tempted by explanations of historical events that stress inevitability. Alternative history at its best can encourage us to appreciate the daunting contingency of history—and the supreme importance for good or ill of individual moral choice.

A Victorian print of Antony and Cleopatra. CORBIS.

This point is effectively made by the best of the essays anthologized in Ferguson's book, Mark Almond's "1989 Without Gorbachev." With bitter irony, Almond argues that we do indeed owe the end of the Cold War to Mikhail Gorbachev. "After generations of dullard apparatchiks had safely guided the Soviet Union to super-power status, it was the bright-eyed Gorbachev who grabbed the steering wheel and headed straight for the rocks." Repression could still have worked in the mid-1980s, and would have found no lack of apologists in the West.

Gorbachev's perestroika, by contrast, wrecked the stagnating Soviet economy while his glasnost discredited his regime. "Gorbachev's belief that a relaxation in international tensions was in the Soviet Union's interest was profoundly misplaced. Only the 'two camps' division of the world provided the kind of global scenario in which such a strange animal as the Soviet economy could function." Had Gorbachev only held on a little longer, he would have discovered that ideological help was on its way.

> The long march through the institutions of post-1960s pacifism and fellow traveling combined with nuclear panic was just about to reach its goal. It was only the surprising and total collapse of Communism . . . which brought much of the Western intelligentsia to admit that the Right had been correct. . . . Had the Wall stayed up, much of the Western elite would have remained oblivious to Communism's failings, moral as much as material, for at least another generation.

But alternative history is seldom at its best. More often it turns into heavy-handed academic drollery—like the 1932 collection *If It Had Happened Otherwise*, in which (among other heavy-handed drolleries) Benjamin Disraeli becomes grand vizier to a rejuvenated

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Muslim kingdom in Spain. Or else into ponderously detailed constructions of imaginary societies—science-fiction without the robots and deathrays—as in Robert Sobel's *For Want of a Nail*, a prolonged counter-history of a world in which American independence was snuffed out at the battle of Saratoga in 1777.

And of course, sometimes it backfires altogether. Reading through many counterfactual histories, one tends to find reinforced one's Tocquevillian feelings of inevitability. In Robert Cowley's *What If? The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been*, another recent anthology of hypothetical history, Alistair Horne considers how history might have been altered had Napoleon halted his career of conquest after the Peace of Tilsit in 1807. But to suppose that Napoleon could have somehow quit the roulette table while he still held all his winnings is to endow him with a personality entirely different from the one he actually had—and such an unnapoleonic Napoleon would never have adventured the first profitable spin. And even if Napoleon could have gotten a grip on his egotism and refrained from starting further wars himself, his empire was so ruthless, exploitative, and menacing that sooner or later the Russians, Austrians, and British would have resumed the war against him.

As for the old chestnut about Napoleon winning at Waterloo, not even Horne can bring himself to believe it. "There were vast fresh forces of Russians, Austrians, and Germans already moving toward France. A second battle, or perhaps several battles, would probably have followed." And behind these battles would have been the strangulating power of the Royal Navy and the superior financial resources of a Britain already embarked upon its industrial revolution.

It could be said that alternative history performs as great a service when it shows that a result was inescapable as when it shows that things might have turned out otherwise. One of the most sensible essays gathered in these anthologies is Theodore F. Cook's in *What If?*, which convincingly argues that the likeliest result of a Japanese victory at the battle of Midway would have been not an Axis victory, but a prolongation of the war and the devastation of the Japanese Home Islands by atomic bombs. Another is Alvin Jackson's in *Virtual History*, which concludes that Anglo-Irish relations would have followed the same tragic course in the twentieth century whether or not the British Liberals had been able to push through the plan for Home Rule for Ireland. "Ireland under Home Rule might well have proved to be not so much Britain's settled, democratic partner as her Yugoslavia."

But what is no service to anyone is the kind of wish-fantasy that predominates in both books. Eminent historian that he is, Stephen Sears is kidding himself to imagine in *What If?* that a Union victory at First Bull Run would have knocked the Confederacy out of the war before it began. In *Virtual History*, Niall Ferguson repeats the assertion (made in greater scope in his 1999 book *The Pity of War*) that British neutrality in 1914 would have brought us something very like the European Union eight decades ahead of schedule while preserving England as a great power—a hypothesis that more closely resembles the daydreams of Civil War reenactors than the realities of the early twentieth century.

As they so often do, in fact, these fantasies reveal more about the fantasizer than they do about the thing fantasized about. Ross Hassig contends in *What If?* that an independent Native American state could have survived in Mexico had Hernando Cortéz been captured and sacrificed by the Aztecs (as he very nearly was) in the climactic battle for Tenochtitlan in 1521—a contention that tells us more about the historical profession's born-again enthusiasm for Indian culture than about the real-life prospects for a stone-tool kingdom whose people lacked immunity to European diseases. Alternative history is the last redoubt of the historical traditionalist—the sort of historian who still cares about high politics, wars, and battles—but dreamy multiculturalists are forcing their way into even this cloistered subgenre. Makes you shudder to think what the rest of the profession must be like. ♦

Swede Success

Ingmar Bergman was wildly overrated—but he still made some great films. BY JONATHAN LEAF

In 1972 an international film critics' poll, conducted by *Sight and Sound* magazine, determined that two of the ten greatest films ever made had been written and directed by Ingmar Bergman. Almost thirty years later, as the ballots for this decade's *Sight and Sound* poll go out, the Swedish director's work is almost totally neglected. Ingmar Bergman is still alive, but increasingly ignored.

Francois Truffaut once said that he had watched Alfred Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes* twenty-five times and that every time he had become so absorbed in the story that he forgot to study the film's technical details. Could anyone say the same about Bergman's much-acclaimed *The Silence*, an almost plotless film about the experiences of two disturbed sisters, whose relationship is never adequately explained, in an unnamed country whose language they do not know? Seen more than once or twice, many of Bergman's most famous films remind one of that old joke about the man who had suffered for his art and now wished others to as well. Do any of Bergman's films deserve to be

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called classics? Certainly none of Bergman's avant-garde films, like *The Silence* or *Persona*, do. But is this the Bergman work deserving attention?

Bergman's reputation for artiness isn't completely deserved. Several of his earliest films to attract attention outside of Sweden are light and engaging. *Dreams*, *A Lesson In Love*, *Smiles of a Summer Night*, and *Wild Strawberries* all are. These movies are often portentous when they are meant to be funny, but they also have wit and a gentle, melancholy spirit reminiscent of the plays of Jean Anouilh. Additionally, these Bergman films are mostly conventional in style, so much so that Bergman made use of a film composer, Erik Nordgren, whose scores, although saccharine, amplify both the pace and the sentiments of the last two of these films.

Dreams, in particular, is an alternately ironic and despairing look at the affairs of two women, one young and one old. The younger one is a fashion model who meets a rich old man who finds that she reminds him of his beloved but deranged wife, now in confinement. The scenes of their brief interlude together are handled with a dramatic efficiency that draws little attention to itself. The young Bergman was no show-off. He skillfully used soft-focus close-ups to hint at the couple's initial attraction and remote, wide-angle photography that emphasizes their ultimate and inevitable estrangement.

A Lesson In Love, the story of a doctor's elaborate scheme to regain his wife's attachment by revealing her lover as a dipsomaniac, has two virtues most people do not associate with Bergman films: genuine laughs and graceful plot twists. It seems unjust that it is not better remembered, though it announced that Bergman was capable of light, clever writing.

That style is displayed as well in the more famous *Smiles of a Summer Night*. This is a film that could have used some sharper editing to clip away its undue length—one-hundred and eleven minutes is surely a bit long for a farce—and it is at times excessively sententious. However, it does ably display the author's affection for Marivaux and Feydeau, harking back to the elegance and fancy of traditional French comedy.

All photos: Everett Collection.

Above: Victor Sjöström's discovery in Wild Strawberries. *Left: Ingmar Bergman directing in 1959.*

In all these films, Bergman had been gradually working toward a more psychological approach. He particularly loved Vittorio de Sica's movie *Umberto D.*, which was released in 1955. Two years later, he used its example to make what is probably his greatest picture, *Wild Strawberries*. Here, Bergman managed to capture one of cinema's most memorable and affecting performances, given by a non-actor, the retired Swedish silent film director Victor Sjostrom, playing a doctor facing intimations of his mortality.

What at the time seemed experimental about the film—Bergman's decision to shoot scenes of Sjostrom talking to figures from his youth as he revisits them in memory—seems anything but experimental today, and, as is the case with each of these movies, we are captured by the mix of whimsy and pathos. These qualities were also notably present in his sensuous but bleak story of the failure of a marriage between a sensitive young man and the tart he takes up with in *Summer with Monika*.

Bergman was still striving to entertain in his almost equally memorable wry comedy-fantasy of 1960, *The Devil's Eye*. Neither sensational nor purposelessly ambiguous, the film examines the easy ways in which love in its earliest stages can founder—by using the idea that Satan has sent Don Juan back to seduce a loving but flighty virgin.

Given such early movies as these, one cannot but wonder why his work abruptly became so emotionally monochromatic and why humor mostly disappeared for a time. In certain ways, Bergman's career was rather like Eugene O'Neill's: Early success at straightforward stories about recognizable people brought fame, and a taste of fame whetted a desire for greater acclaim—which only the most unrelenting "seriousness" could achieve.

Like most of us, Bergman was capable of being impressed by the attention of the famous, and a reader of his autobiography, *The Magic Lantern*, can't help but notice that he neglects to mention Max Von Sydow, but includes accounts of Garbo, Chaplin, and Streisand, among many other celebrities.

Bergman's father had been one of Stockholm's most well-known pastors.

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The city's leading citizens often visited the family's house. As an adult, Bergman must have been especially sensitive about the intelligentsia's changing attitude towards belief. He was desperately unhappy in the postwar years, and he must have asked himself if celebrity could be a balm for his distress. How, having briefly grasped hold of fame, could he keep this transient prize?

The sophisticated crowd was hostile to organized religion and fond of formalistic exhibitionism. Bergman in the 1960s, like O'Neill in the late 1920s, began producing work for the *au courant*. Only at the end of his career did the director, like O'Neill with the posthumous *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, revert with the unaffectedly somber *Autumn Sonata* and his valedictory fairytale, *Fanny and Alexander*.

Still, there lingers in the popular consciousness the perception that a Bergman film is something long and opaque. This reputation derives from the sequence of films that he produced beginning with the once much-trumpeted 1956 film, *The Seventh Seal*, a movie that was actually produced in between *Smiles of a Summer Night* and *Wild Strawberries*. Though the film is not as over-the-top as many remember it to be (and as many later Bergman films are), it did declare his fondness for expressionism, modernism, and bombast.

Frequently parodied, of course, is the scene in which the inevitability of death is indicated by the appearance of Death himself, on the beach and playing chess with a knight returned from the crusades. The knight is much concerned with the silence of God—though one might think he might be more worried that the Crusades ended in 1271 and that the particular outbreak of the plague which is clearly being depicted, the Black Death, took place in the mid-fourteenth century. Regardless, Bergman has more in store for him. For there, on the beach, this knight, with his unbeatable timing, manages to run into the Holy Family, who, it turns out, have just been brought back to life in the middle of plague-stricken Sweden. This, the critics explained, was genius.

Max Von Sydow plays chess against Death in The Seventh Seal

To be fair, few men could have failed to be seduced by the reaction to the film. Told that he was both a poet and prophet in his self-conscious obscurity and nihilism, Bergman was persuaded by its critical and commercial success to make three films on the theme of the purported death or silence of God, a subject which could not have been more perfectly selected to appeal to the international liberal intelligentsia.

The second movie in this trilogy was *Winter Light*. (It is indicative of Bergman and of his disdain for anything remotely "easy" that he has said that he considers this the most excellent of his films.) The story of a disaffected Lutheran pastor and his attempts to break free from his dowdy mistress, a woman cursed with horrible eczema, *Winter Light* is an uncompromising attempt to reckon with the question of how a man should carry forward his religious duties in the absence of belief. At a mere eighty-one minutes in length, though, it is ponderous and wearying, a film that seems to be easily an hour longer. Empty of comedy, devoid of music, and filled with lengthy scenes shot in long, rolling takes, it is a draining experience to view.

Yet critics saw depth in its humorlessness and gravity in its slowness. And the critical approbation emboldened the director to move further in the direction of idiosyncrasy and deliberate vagueness. He also seemed spurred on by the fact, which he acknowledged his own awareness of, that foreign critics were then showering even more praise on the purposefully laborious work of Michelangelo Antonioni. Now convinced that he could use the tools of cinema to render almost any psychological nuance and that critics and audiences would be tolerant and appreciative of his experimentation, Bergman did not back away from the direction in which he had headed.

Consequently, from 1964 to 1972, his films ceased to adhere to the most ordinary notions of what cinematic syntax and grammar are, the rules of how a movie—any movie—should be made. *The Passion of Anna* did not bother with proper alternation between close-ups, full shots, reverse shots, establishing shots, and masters. *Cries and Whispers* lacked ordinary movement between interior and exterior scenes and between day and night sequences. Its sets were unrealistic, its time and place vague. Indeed, its fantastic elements, meant to be shocking, are useful only as unintentional comedy.

In *The Silence* Bergman decided to present whole scenes completely lacking in dialogue and normal human interaction—as in the segment in which the audience is asked to watch for several minutes as a group of dwarves merely walk down a hotel hallway. In *Hour of The Wolf* the director dispensed with the story line—and we are supposed to think it profound that Bergman in the

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Seduction in Smiles of a Summer Night

role of writer-director can't make up his mind as to whether or not Max Von Sydow's character has or has not engaged in the senseless murder of a child.

As a seal of modernistic authenticity, these films are largely composed of what editors call "cold" film, pictures without music and often without sound. With respect to crisp and efficient editing, Bergman could now hardly be bothered: *Persona*, famously, even included a scene which is repeated seemingly for no other reason than to show the filmmaker's daring, avant-garde sensibility.

All this expressionistic modernism failed to cover up a multitude of problems which had emerged both on and off Bergman's sets. Problems emerged in part because of lack of funds. As Bergman rarely had money for rehearsals or re-shooting, some of his early films had included glaring instances of what actors call "indicating," the tendency of a performer to respond to a gesture before the cue for it has been given. (In *Smiles of a Summer Night*, Harriet Andersson shrinks from a slap before it is given; in *Through A Glass Darkly*, Lars Passgard gets up to follow the same actress before it is clear that she is going anywhere.)

A second problem was liquor. Bergman has admitted that an actor's repeated drunkenness forced *The Magician* to be changed from a comedy to a melodrama and that he was himself at times intoxicated and abusive during shoots.

The difficulties though just as often had their origins in the scripts. Was it really possible that, as in *Naked Night*, a circus ringmaster could be almost blind drunk one moment, and then, hardly an hour later, able twice to knock a man's hat off with a bullwhip at a distance of roughly thirty feet, humiliating the man without injuring him in the slightest? Has there ever really been an actress like the one Liv Ullman plays in *Persona*, one who refuses to speak for months and months as a means of gaining attention? (That there may be many theater directors who might like to meet such an actress is not proof of the possibility.)

The defense that this is all supposed to be symbolic is no defense. What, after all, is the point of using experimental devices as a means to reveal psychology if the characters are not rendered in a plausible manner?

Bergman must have had some awareness that these films were pretentious and boring because his work began to change, much for the better, after *Cries and Whispers*. His reliance on cheap modernist tricks halted. In his film version of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, the director again accepted the idea that one could edify and amuse. As rich as the film is in visual wit and imagination, it is regrettable that Bergman selected a cast with only one first class singer (Hakan Hagegard as Papageno) and a Tamino (Josef Kostlinger) with the naturalness of Al Gore. His following film, *Scenes From A Marriage*, was likewise straightforward and intermittently impressive—if fatally flawed. In attempting to unite the subtlety of Chekhov's plays with the trenchancy of Strindberg's, Bergman produced a four-hour-long film with Strindberg's subtlety and Chekhov's trenchancy. (The truncated two-and-a-half-hour American version is a gross distortion of the original as it cuts out the wife's abortion and virtually eliminates the couple's children.)

That interest in Bergman's work has declined in his own country is unsurprising. His was not an exemplary life. He married five times. He philandered greatly. He was an often absent father. In his maturity, he cheated on his taxes. In his youth, he applauded Hitler. (His suicidal brother even helped found the Swedish National Socialist Party.)

It is the decline of his reputation outside his homeland that is telling. Bergman hoped that film could be made to be as psychological a medium as the novel or the stage-play, and his experimental films aspired to render the inner landscape of the mind. That the characters in *Persona* do not begin to have the vividness, richness, and lasting power that Hamlet or Anna Karenina has is no great judgment against him, but rather a reminder that film places much less emphasis on words—the one truly supreme instrument we possess for the precise delineation of complex shades of mood, thought, and feeling. It is no accident that Bergman's best films were mostly romantic comedies and fantasy adventures. These are what film, utilizing its speed of narrative, its music, and the faces and personality of its greatest actors, best brings to life.

It is too bad that Bergman, and the critics who cheered his turn toward the obscure and sloppy, didn't have more respect for the genres of fantasy and romantic comedy, where his own achievements are principally found. It is doubtful that *Smiles of a Summer Night* and *Wild Strawberries* were among the greatest of film masterpieces, but they were surely something of which to be proud. ♦

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Parody

ABC News was on the defensive last week when personality Barbara Walters began plugging Campbell's soup on her morning talk show, *The View*. In one show Walters asked audience members, "Didn't we grow up eating Campbell's soup?" The audience responded with a chorus of M'm M'm Good! "You wouldn't think modern TV would go this far," one critic told the *Wall Street Journal*. "The shocking thing about this is that nobody is trying to disguise it. There's always a sneaky way to do product placement . . . but this is absolutely shameless."

—*News item*

ANNOUNCER: This is World News Tonight with Peter Jennings. Here's Peter Jennings in New York, the city so nice they named it twice.

JENNINGS: Good evening. We begin tonight with the continuing saga of the vote count in Florida, home of delicious Florida orange juice—a day without which, incidentally, is like a day without sunshine. The Florida supreme court has complicated an already complicated picture by issuing an order that has Bush forces riled. For the latest, we go first to Ann Compton, with the Bush campaign in Austin, Texas. Ann?

COMPTON: It's been another long day here in Austin, Peter, and Bush officials tell ABC News that when they're feeling tired, they reach for PowerBar, the low-fat pick-me-up for people on the go. Spokeswoman Karen Hughes ate six during her press briefing today—that's how yummy these little buggers are.

[video] KAREN HUGHES: Mmmffmpppffmm.

COMPTON: So that's the picture from Austin. Peter?

JENNINGS: Ann, how is the campaign taking this latest setback from the Florida supreme court?

COMPTON: Not as bad as you might imagine, Peter. A large number of the Bush people down here began drinking almost immediately after the order came down. We're told they're particularly fond of Harvey's Bristol Creme over at Bush headquarters, which as you may know has been a favorite potation, as they call it, of the Bush family for generations. Harvey's: for the times of your life. Peter?

JENNINGS: Thank you, Ann Compton in Florida, wearing a lovely Ferragamo scarf, available this week only at Bloomingdale's and selected outlets. The Gore campaign had a good deal to say about the court ruling, too, and for that we go down to Linda Douglass in Tallahassee. Linda?

DOUGLASS: Peter, once the Gore people heard the news, campaign chairman Bill Daley appeared jubilant . . .

JENNINGS: Linda, speaking of campaigns, wouldn't you say that Mr. Daley is a pretty good candidate, as it were, for the Hair Club For Men?

DOUGLASS: Indeed, Peter. In fact, if Chairman Daley calls now, he and our other viewers will be able to take advantage of this exciting one-time offer: Buy three gallons of Rogaine, get the fourth for free. Operators are standing by. Peter?

JENNINGS: Linda Douglass from Tallahassee, thank you. Linda, incidentally, wearing a quite provocative lace teddy from our friends at Victoria's Secret—who were also, in the interests of full disclosure, kind enough to provide the male girdle I'm wearing right now. In a moment—after this commercial message—ABC News analyst George Stephanopoulos. As always, George's analysis is brought to us by the Democratic National Committee . . .

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The Era of "Moral Essences"

Arnold Beichman is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

"A State which is incompetent to satisfy different races condemns itself; a State which labors to neutralize, to absorb or to expel them, destroys its own vitality; a State which does not include them is destitute of the chief basis of self-government."

These are the words of Lord Acton, the British historian and moralist, written more than a century ago. How clearly they apply to the Balkan states and in particular to Serbia. And how clearly they apply to other parts of the world with conflicting nationalisms.

Lord Acton was writing when the Balkans were the powder keg of Europe and when what was happening between the expiring Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria, its vassal state, engaged the statesmen of Europe. Today the statesmen of Europe, this time with the support of the United States and NATO, are trying in the name of the United Nations to stop war-crime killings in the territories of what was once Yugoslavia. Will the new Yugoslavia permit a nationalist-driven Albanian population to create an independent Kosovo?

Lord Acton's words lead to a question of some importance to existing states: **Was the UN condemnation of Serbia based on the vague, undefined notion that every "nation" has a right to its own state?** Corsica, a French island in the Mediterranean, wants independence. There is an independence movement in northern Spain among the Basques. The population of Acheh in faraway Sumatra has been seeking independence from Indonesia for more than half a century. Does Tibet, a victim of communist imperialism, have a right to independence from China? Will Sri Lanka allow the Tamil Tigers to form their own country? Are these legitimate claims?

These claims to "independence" have proven one thing: Marx and Engels didn't know what they were talking about when they wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* that "national differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing. ...The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still further." Tell that to the Chechens.

Nationalism (or subnationalism) has been the major political "growth industry" since the end of World War II, although its modern origins go back to the mid-nineteenth century. Whereas there were fifty-one signatories to the original UN Charter back in 1945, today's UN membership numbers 190, and more are surely coming, among them ministates with no visible means of support.

Alan Bullock has defined nationalism as "a mass emotion [which] has been the most powerful political force in the history of the modern world." How to deal with that mass emotion will be the real task of the twenty-first century. Prague showed one way to do it: when Slovakia wanted to secede from Czechoslovakia it did so peacefully. Will Montenegro be allowed by Yugoslavia's new leadership to secede peacefully from Serbia? The Western concept of nation was well summarized by Edmund Burke: "A nation is a moral essence, not a geographical arrangement."

Who's the next "moral essence"?

—Arnold Beichman

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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The Informed Traveler

1st *in a series*

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